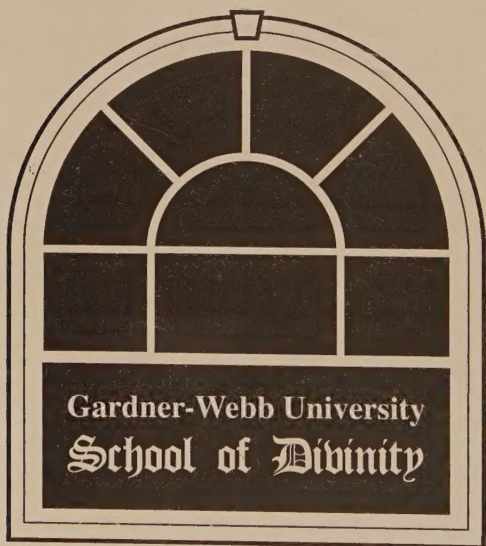


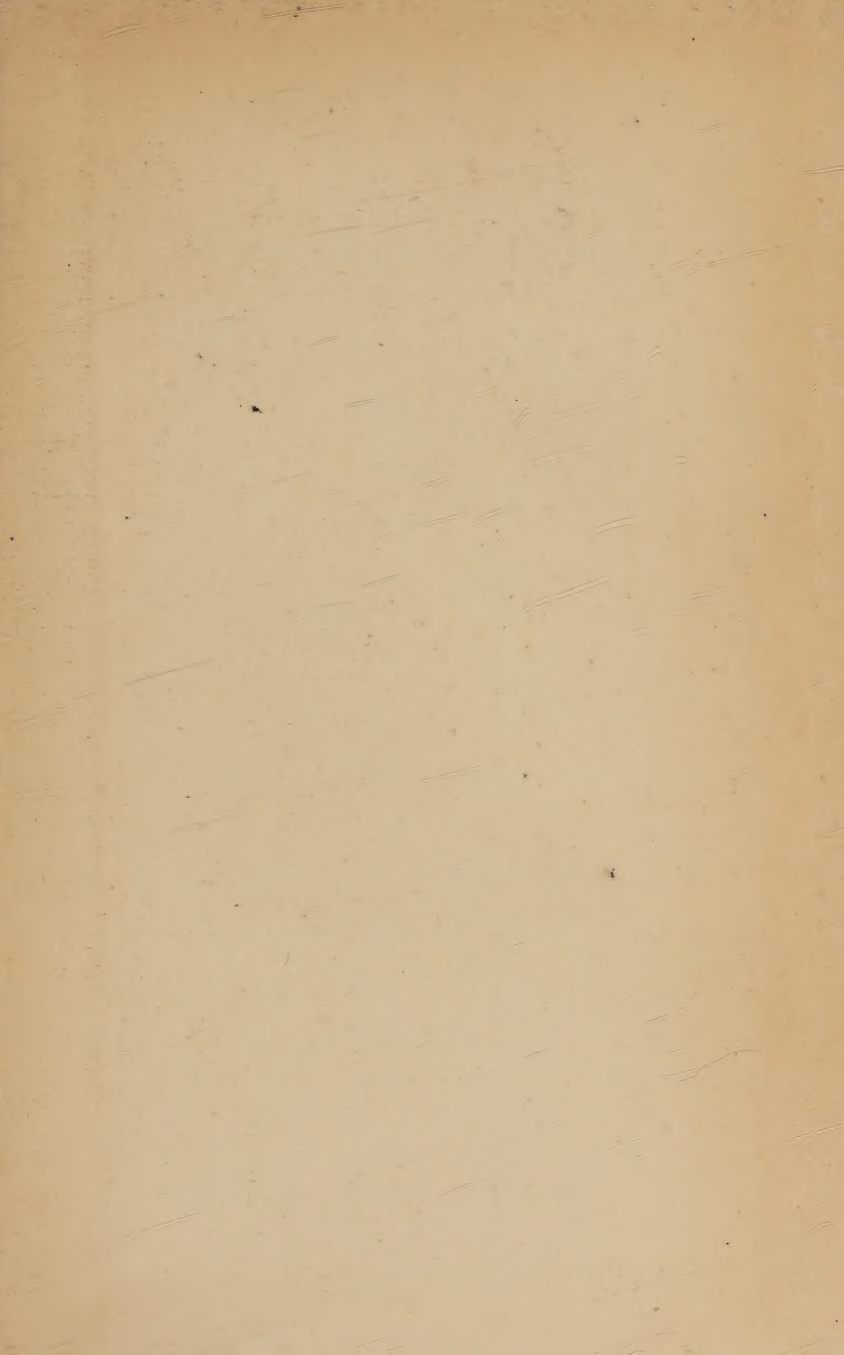
576

School of Divinity



This book donated
by

— Dr. Kyle M. Yates, Jr. —



Dover Memorial Library
Gardner-Webb University
P.O. Box 836
Boiling Springs, N.C. 28017

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

THE WORLD'S PULPIT SERIES.

Crown 8vo, cloth. 3s. 6d. each.

VOLUMES READY :—

TRUE RELIGION.

DEAN FARRAR.

OLD AND NEW.

REV. CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

THE GLORY OF LIFE.

REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.

A NEW EARTH.

REV. JAMES ADDERLEY, M.A.

To be followed by

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

REV. CANON NEWBOLT.

THE DISCIPLINE OF FAITH.

REV. DARWELL STONE, M.A.

THE TOUCH OF GOD.

REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D.

Others in preparation by

REV. CANON KNOX LITTLE

REV. R. F. HORTON, D.D.

REV. JOHN CLIFFORD, D.D.

REV. R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A.

REV. E. A. STUART, M.A.

REV. J. E. WATTS DITCHFIELD, M.A.

REV. H. R. GAMBLE, M.A.

REV. E. GRIFFITH JONES, B.A.

REV. SPENCER JONES, M.A.

REV. A. G. MORTIMER, D.D.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

3A
133
27
Being a Course of Sermons

DELIVERED IN

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, MARYLEBONE ROAD, N.W.

BY

REV. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, REV. A. ROBERTSON,
D.D. D.D.

REV. H. B. SWETE, D.D. REV. W. SANDAY, D.D.

REV. R. J. KNOWLING, D.D. REV. A. C. HEADLAM, M.A.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

REV. JAMES ADDERLEY

LONDON

S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.

47, GREAT RUSSELL STREET

1903

PREFACE

THESE sermons were delivered in my church in the early part of 1903. They are published by permission of the preachers. The large congregations which assembled to hear them were a proof of the longing in the hearts of many for definite and precise information from authority of the first rank on matters connected with Biblical Criticism. Some persons foolishly avoid listening to the critics of the Bible because they fear that they will have to give up some cherished belief if they do so. But no lover of truth can be really afraid of hearing the truth. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that we have no possible right to exempt the Bible from the process of literary criticism which we rightly welcome for every

other kind of book. Obviously if the Bible contains the Word of God it must be able to stand the test of criticism better than any other literature. And in fact it has been so. At the same time one cannot but feel that there are some "critics" who deal unfairly with the Bible, who start with assumptions against miracle which they would not dare to start with if they were criticising anything else. They have theories of their own which they will not allow the study of the books of the Bible to disturb. They are really quite as unscientific in the true sense as the most conservative of Bible readers. But, as has been remarked, theirs is not real "criticism," it is rather "advocacy." * Now I think that between the extreme "critics" on the one side and the blind "verbal inspirationists" on the other side there exists a vast mass of earnest people who honestly want to face facts and to be fair and sane and just. Some of these are students, and from them I selected my preachers. From the rest I got my congre-

* Dr. Gore.

gation. I find myself here associated with students the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. My only excuse for daring to write herein is that I have during the last seventeen years rubbed up against sceptics of various kinds, ranging from the bellowing apostles of Hyde Park to the cultured ignoramuses of Mayfair. In most cases I have found that difficulties proceed from an inadequate grasp of what the Church teaches on such matters as Inspiration and from a mistaken idea that orthodox believers are committed to the theories generally associated with the name of Calvin. I hope that these sermons may do something towards correcting such misapprehensions, and may serve to show both that learned critics may be devout Christians and that humble followers of our Lord may reverently and without fear approach the discussion of matters too often supposed to be of interest only to the literary expert.

This book does not claim to treat exhaustively even the subjects with which it actually deals, and it is obvious that there

are many other matters which would require treatment if a complete volume were projected; for example, the problem of the Fourth Gospel. At the same time there is enough here to set people thinking, and the lists of suggested books may also lead our readers to pursue the study for themselves.

It may be well also to add that each preacher acted independently of the others, and is only responsible for his own statements.

JAMES ADDERLEY.

ST. MARK'S VICARAGE,
MARYLEBONE ROAD, N.W.

CONTENTS



	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
BY THE REV. JAMES ADDERLEY.	
HOW TO READ THE OLD TESTAMENT	3
BY THE REV. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D., MASTER OF SELWYN COLLEGE AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, CAMBRIDGE.	
THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE	29
BY THE REV. H. B. SWETE, D.D., REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, CAMBRIDGE.	
THE AUTHORITY AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES	59
BY THE REV. R. J. KNOWLING, D.D., PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS AT KING'S COLLEGE.	
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST	97
BY THE REV. A. ROBERTSON, D.D., PRINCIPAL OF KING'S COLLEGE, BISHOP-ELECT OF EXETER.	

	PAGE
THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST	123
BY THE REV. W. SANDAY, D.D., LADY MARGARET PRO- FESSOR OF DIVINITY, OXFORD.	
THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL. <i>Part I.</i> .	161
BY THE REV. A. C. HEADLAM, M.A., EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL, PRINCIPAL- ELECT OF KING'S COLLEGE.	
THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL. <i>Part II.</i> .	183
BY THE REV. A. C. HEADLAM, M.A.	

I

HOW TO READ THE OLD TESTAMENT

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

I

HOW TO READ THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D., *Master of Selwyn College,
and Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge.*

“God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son.”—
HEB. i. 1, 2.

OUR subject is “How to read the Old Testament,” and my sermon is the first of a series on certain questions connected with Biblical criticism. They are questions about which there has been much discussion recently, and about which there is probably in many minds a vague sense of uncertainty and unsettlement; questions nevertheless of primary importance in relation to our Christian faith,

and therefore in relation to our Christian life; for true faith must find expression in life, and vigorous life depends ultimately on faith. It is no doubt possible that a man may be in grave perplexity, and feel compelled to suspend his judgment upon some of these questions, and yet have that living faith in our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ which is the essence of the Christian religion. But if he will but honestly "fight his doubts" and "face the spectres of his mind," he will "come at length to find a stronger faith his own." *

In the last quarter of a century criticism has been busy with the Old Testament, and the question is asked whether, if the contentions of criticism be true, the Old Testament can continue to have any value for the Christian Church. Formerly it was the moral difficulties of the Old Testament which were a stumbling-block; now it is rather questions as to the date and authorship and historical accuracy of the Old Testament which are the cause of perplexity. The answers which are being given with

* Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, xcvi.

increasing unanimity to these questions by students of the Old Testament seem to necessitate the abandonment of what may be called the traditional views of its character as an inspired book, and to not a few devout readers of the Bible they seem to shake the very foundations of faith. "Had we not better," some are disposed to say, "give up the Old Testament, and confine ourselves to the New?—perhaps even to the Gospels, as the most trustworthy record of our Lord's teaching; or even to the Sermon on the Mount, as the kernel and essence of His teaching?"

Yet how, I ask, can the Christian Church dare to give up the volume upon which the spiritual life of our Blessed Lord and His Apostles was nourished?—the volume which they handed on to the Christian Church as "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Nothing but unworthy cowardice would counsel such a course. It may be that we

must give up long-cherished ideas, revise our beliefs as to the meaning of Inspiration, and recast our views of the ways in which God teaches us in this generation through the Old Testament. But truth has nothing to fear from frank and reverent investigation of its title-deeds. Truth must welcome all the light which may make its message clearer, from whatever source it comes.

In half an hour I can only speak to you of some few principles which may guide us in our reading of the Old Testament. I cannot attempt to solve difficulties or answer objections in detail. But often in times of perplexity and circumstances of difficulty the best course is to try to go back to principles—principles which may guide us towards the solution of our perplexity, or direct us to a right course of action when decision is difficult.

It is possible that to some I may seem to say too much, and to treat the Bible with a reverence that borders on superstition; while to others I may seem to say too little, and to treat it with a freedom that tends towards scepticism; while others, again, may perhaps

be disappointed that I do not deal directly with their special difficulties. But it is to the greatness of the Bible, and not to its difficulties, that I want to direct your attention to-day; for then, if you think of the greatness of the Bible, the difficulties may fall into their right place and take their right proportion. I want you to think of principles which may help all and guide all to think out for themselves the answers to their various difficulties, if they have them. May the Holy Spirit of Truth guide you and me in all our study of the Bible, in all our endeavours to learn and appropriate the message of the Holy Scriptures!

1. First, I want you to think of the unity of the Bible. Why do we rightly speak of the many books which are included in the Bible as one Book? * What is it that forms the

* In the fourth century "Greek writers came to use the term, 'The Books' (*Biblia*, pl.) for the Bible. In process of time this name passed into the vocabulary of the Western Church; and in the thirteenth century, by a happy solecism, the neuter plural came to be regarded as a feminine singular, and 'The Books' became by common consent 'The Book' (*Biblia*, sing.), in which form the word has passed into the languages of modern Europe" (Bishop Westcott, *Bible in the Church*, p. 5).

connecting link between the two Testaments, and gives a common character to the widely different elements which they contain? Our text suggests the answer. It is the fact that throughout the Bible God is the speaker. The Old Testament is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man "by divers portions and in divers manners"; in facts and in words, patiently, gradually, continuously, unfolding His character and His purposes, and preparing for the central fact of the world's history—the Incarnation of His Son. In the New Testament that Son is Himself the message. The New Testament is the record of His coming, His life, His teaching; the interpretation of His person and His work. The whole Bible is the history of redemption. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* Without the New Testament the Old Testament would be a magnificent failure; without the Old Testament the New Testament would be an inexplicable phenomenon. The New Testament presumes and explains the Old Testament. The Old Testament lays

* Rev. xix. 10.

the foundations and provides the pre-suppositions for the New Testament. The New Testament does not supersede, but illuminates the Old Testament. The Christian Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."

2. But I want you, in the second place, to think of the distinction between the Old Testament and the New. If it is important to emphasise the truth of the unity of the Bible, it is equally important to recognise the distinction between the Old Testament and the New. The revelation of which the Old Testament is the record was gradual, progressive, preparatory. The revelation of which the New Testament is the record and interpretation is final. The character of the Old Testament revelation is admirably described by St. Chrysostom thus: "This you must first know well, that God does not turn or alter or change from one mind to another. He does not approve of one thing at one moment and another thing at another, but remaining Himself unchangeable and im-

mutable, He accommodates Himself to the weakness of men. God often speaks and legislates, not according to His own power, but according to our capacity for hearing.”* There have been times when this important truth of the distinction between the Old Testament and the New has been ignored, and the whole Bible has been treated as if it were homogeneous throughout. Proof texts for the mysteries of the Christian faith have been sought in the Old Testament. Conduct incompatible with the Christian law of love has been justified by the examples of the Old Testament. But our Lord Himself has given us the clearest teaching as to the inferiority of the Old Testament, and the accommodation of some of its precepts to an elementary stage in the education of mankind. “It was said to them of old time” . . . “But I say unto you.” † “Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives.” ‡ When the disciples would have imitated the

* Hom. on Psa. xciv.

† St. Matt. v. 21, 22; 27, 28; 33, 34; 38, 39; 43, 44.

‡ St. Matt. xix. 8.

example of Elijah and called fire down from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans, He rebuked them for their failure to understand the spirit of His mission. *

This principle of the difference between the Old Testament and the New furnishes the explanation of many of the so-called 'moral difficulties' of the Old Testament. Commands given to the Israelites, the conduct of some of their heroes, the language even of prophets and psalmists, must not be judged by the standard of the New Testament. When exterminatory wars, for example, were a common practice, the Israelites could be charged with the destruction of nations which had forfeited their right to exist, without any violation of their conscience.† When men looked for the complete vindication of God's moral government of the world in this life, and felt that if evil went unpunished God's honour was at stake, then they could pray for vengeance on

* Though the words, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," appear to be an addition to the original text of St. Luke ix. 55, they doubtless express the purport of Christ's rebuke.

† See Mozley's *Lectures on the Old Testament*, Lect. iv.

their enemies. But that is not the spirit of Christ.

3. In the next place, I will ask you to think of the variety of the elements contained in the Old Testament. In reading the Old Testament it is important to recognise the great diversity of the elements which compose it. It has been called a library;* it represents a nation's literature. It contains history, codes of law, poetry, philosophy, biography. The prophetic books, let me remind you, include many different elements — admonition, exhortation, doctrine, history, biography, as well as prediction. In the midst of all this variety, you must not be surprised or alarmed if you find all kinds of literary methods employed, such as were familiar to the writers of the time. It was the custom of ancient historians to put speeches in the mouths of historical characters to express what were, or what might have been, their thoughts upon

* "The first simple collective title of the whole Bible appears to be that which is found in Jerome, in the fourth century, 'The Divine Library' (*Bibliotheca Divina*)."
—Bishop Westcott, *Bible in the Church*, p. 5.

a particular occasion. It seems tolerably certain that this has been done by the authors of the Book of Deuteronomy and the Book of Chronicles. In the Book of Job the discussion of philosophical questions is thrown into a dramatic form. In Ecclesiastes the writer speaks in the name of Solomon, though he must have been one of the latest of the writers in the Old Testament. We must expect to find use made of all literary methods which were familiar to ancient Israel; and we may have to recognise that human and temporary and circumstantial elements are larger than used commonly to be thought. Inspiration did not extinguish individuality. The Holy Spirit did not crush a man's personality, but made use of his natural temperament. Inspiration did not transport a man out of the age in which he lived, for in addressing his contemporaries he must speak in terms which they would understand. Inspiration did not work, so to speak, in an abstract manner, but made use of circumstances, and institutions, and events, as the basis of teaching. Just as in the New Testament the par-

ticular needs of particular Churches drew out the Apostolic teaching which furnishes principles for the Church in all ages, so the various needs of different ages and different individuals in the history of Israel drew out, in divers portions and in divers manners, the teaching which trained Israel and prepared for the coming of Christ.

There is another principle which it is well to remember in this connexion. All parts of the Old Testament are not of equal value for the Christian Church. That seems to be a mere truism, and yet there have been times when all Scripture has been placed almost, if not quite, upon the same level. But a moment's reflection on the use of the Old Testament in the New will show that while some parts were familiarly known, others seem to have been but little studied.

We must not indeed be too hasty in affirming that any part of Scripture has no longer any meaning or importance for us. We must endeavour to bring all parts of the Old Testament into their proper relation to the whole to which they belong. The danger of mis-

interpreting texts torn from their context is familiar to us. Equally may we fail to see the meaning of whole chapters unless we consider them in relation to the whole of which they form part. There are some of the Old Testament lessons appointed to be read on Sundays which seem to have no message for us—one of Bacon's essays or one of Tennyson's poems, some say, would be much more instructive—until we recognise their place in the course of the history, and reflect how they show how, through good and evil, through, or in spite of, human selfishness and human passions, an overruling Providence was working out its sovereign purposes.

4. Whatever else may be obscure, however much uncertainty may rest upon details, the main outlines of the history of Israel appear to be unquestionable; and this brings me to my next point, that in our reading of the Old Testament we should ponder again and again upon the course of that marvellous history as a whole, in order to realise how God trained His people and made Himself known to them, bore with their self-will and obstinacy, and

preserved them to play their part in the great purpose of mercy which He had in view for the whole world.

The Bible opens with an account of the Creation of the world, for it is going to treat of Divine purposes which are co-extensive with the Universe, and not merely with the history of a nation. With the call of Abraham the history of the Divine plan for the world's redemption begins. In Egypt his family becomes a nation, and in the Exodus Jehovah reveals Himself in action as its Redeemer. Under the leadership of Moses Israel is placed under the discipline of the Law, to be developed, extended, and interpreted as occasion arose. It enters upon its inheritance in Canaan; yet for centuries it seemed doubtful whether Canaanite or Israelite, Baal or Jehovah, would be victorious. The establishment of the monarchy was a declension from the ideal polity of Israel, rendered necessary by human weakness for the consolidation of the nation. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple it must have seemed that the national history was finally closed; but, contrary to all

human expectation, Israel rose from the grave of exile and returned to its own land, "The unity of a Church succeeded to the unity of a nation." The Law guarded them from the assaults of surrounding heathenism. Through heroic struggles they kept their trust, till in the fulness of the time the Christ was born for Whom all this long and varied history had been preparing. And not only by the discipline of external circumstances had God been training Israel through manifold vicissitudes of fortune; but all along He had been teaching them to know Him more fully, and to understand better His demands upon them as individuals, and His purposes for them as a nation. The Law was given to them to govern their life; Prophets interpreted God's will and stimulated hope; Wise Men pondered on problems of life, and formulated maxims of conduct; Psalmists framed the language of devotion and showed how man can commune with his God.

5. Now let me speak a few words about the permanent value of the Old Testament. It is no mere record of antiquarian interest,

but an inexhaustible source of instruction for the Christian Church.

(a) Consider the simple fact of Israel's existence. A petty nation amid the vast empires of the East, surviving when they perished, exercising — who can deny it? — a vaster and more permanent influence on the world than Assyria, or Babylon, or Egypt, or even Greece and Rome. Is it not a convincing evidence of Divine providence, Divine purpose, Divine government of the world, working slowly, patiently, surely, towards a consummation, prepared for, hinted at, outlined beforehand, yet greater far in its realisation than the boldest imagination could anticipate? There is much that perplexes us in that history, yet it moves on towards its end. It has been well said that it is by anticipation a Divine commentary upon the most perplexing passages in the history of Christianity itself. “Acts of faithlessness and apostasy in the history of the Church, self-willed divisions, premature settlements of practice or doctrine, will appear at once more significant, and, for those who

inherit the burden which they impose, more endurable. The record of the history of Israel is a concrete philosophy of history. If we read its meaning we shall be better enabled, and then only truly enabled, to look with hope upon the chequered annals of Christendom without extenuating the sin and the issues of sin by which they are defaced.”*

(b) In the next place, the teaching of the prophets can never be obsolete. The profundity and purity of their conceptions of God, His nature and attributes; their incisive expositions of moral and social duty; their indomitable enforcement of the lessons of faith and hope—these can never become obsolete, and the old words are filled with fresh significance, the old exhortations gain an added power, the old hopes have a new guarantee for fulfilment, in the light of the revelation of the Incarnation.

(c) And thirdly, the heart appeal of the Psalter can never lose its force. Men go back to the Psalms to furnish them with words for their public acts of praise and their private

* Bishop Westcott *Hebrews*, p. 494.

communings with God. The Psalms give an unhesitating answer to the questions: Can God be known? Is God a personal God? There are, doubtless, jarring notes which remind us that the Psalter is the product of the Old Covenant and not of the New; but silently we transform or accommodate them to the standard of the Gospel, while the golden words with which the Psalter teems glitter more brilliantly in the light of the glory of Christ.

6. Read the message of the Old Testament as it spoke to the men of old times who lived in the midst of the events it records and listened to the prophets whose words it preserves. Read it also as it speaks to us who know its fulfilment in Christ.

(a) Read it to understand, so far as may be, its original significance. Put yourself in the place of the Israelites who came out of Egypt, or the citizens of Jerusalem who listened to Isaiah. It was not so easy for them to see the hand of God in their deliverance, as we are apt to suppose: it was not so obvious at the moment that

Isaiah truly saw the right course in the tangled politics of his time, as we fancy it must have been when we read his burning words. You may learn better how to meet the trials of faith and courage of our own time as you learn to understand those of a time long ago.

This is one of the services which criticism is doing for us. Criticism is restoring reality to the Old Testament by bringing it into connexion with the life of Israel, by making us understand the circumstances under which it arose, and the way in which it shows the methods of God's working in the world. Criticism helps us to feel how human a book it is, and yet just because it is so human, how Divine.

(b) But read the Old Testament also as fulfilled in Christ. What does that mean? It does not mean that its significance is exhausted, but that the old words are filled with a larger meaning; that a light is thrown upon the dark places of Israel's history; that the mysterious ways of God with man are explained and justified.

7. "If thou desirest to draw profit from the Scriptures," says Thomas à Kempis, "read them with humility, simplicity, and faith." Approach them with the desire to learn and not to criticise. We must not approach them "with the assumption—sanctioned though it may have been by traditional use—that God must have taught His people, and us through His people, in one particular way. We must not presumptuously stake the inspiration and Divine authority of the Old Testament on any foregone conclusion as to the method and shape in which the records have come down to us." * Still less must we approach the Scriptures with a prejudice that the Divine education of Israel is a myth, prophecy a delusion, and the possibility of communion between man and God an empty superstition. But if you come as learners, without prejudice, with humility, simplicity, and faith, you will find, I am convinced, that the greatness of the Old Testament throws its difficulties into the shade. You will find in it the confirmation of

* Bishop Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 493.

your faith, the enlargement of your hope, the quickening of your love.

For, surely, as you study the "moral miracle" of Israel's history, your faith that God rules the world will be confirmed; amid all the perplexities of modern life you will be strengthened to hold fast the belief that "the Lord is King, be the people never so impatient."

Your hope will be enlarged to look for the fulfilment of a Divine purpose of love and goodness, for which human life and human lives, yours and mine among them, are being steadily shaped.

Your love towards the God of mercy and redemption will be quickened as you ponder over the infinite and untiring love which leads up to the greatest act of love in the world's history—the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Sacrifice of Calvary.

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."

BOOKS FOR STUDY AND REFERENCE

OUT of the vast number of books bearing on this subject only a few can be mentioned here, and the selection must necessarily be somewhat arbitrary. In those named here modern critical views are, as a rule, adopted, but are applied with moderation and reverence.

I. ON THE OLD TESTAMENT GENERALLY.

1. *For introduction:*

Bishop Westcott, *The Bible in the Church* (Introductory chapter, pp. 1-16); Essay on "The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle" in *Commentary on the Hebrews*, pp. 469-495 (Macmillan).

Bishop Boyd-Carpenter, *An Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures* (Dent).

Kirkpatrick, *The Divine Library of the Old Testament* (Macmillan).

Sanday, *The Oracles of God* (Longmans).

2. *For fuller study and reference:*

G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament* (Hodder and Stoughton).

Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (A. and C. Black).

Sanday, *Bampton Lectures on Inspiration* (Longmans).

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (T. and T. Clark).

Various articles in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (T. and T. Clark).

II. ON THE PROPHETS AND PROPHECY.

1. *For introduction :*

A. B. Davidson, Article on " Prophecy and Prophets " in
Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.

Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets* (Macmillan).

Ottley, *The Hebrew Prophets* (Rivingtons).

2. *For fuller study :*

Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel* (A. and C.
Black).

Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy* (T. and T. Clark).

III. FOR THE HISTORY.

Ottley, *History of the Hebrews* (Cambridge University
Press).

Wade, *Old Testament History* (Methuen).

Kent, *History of the Hebrew People* and *History of
the Jewish People* (Smith, Elder and Co.).

IV. FOR THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. *For introduction :*

Burney, *Outlines of Old Testament Theology* (Riv-
ingtons).

2. *For fuller study :*

Oehler, *Old Testament Theology* (T. and T. Clark). Or,
Schultz, *Old Testament Theology* (T. and T. Clark).

II

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE

II

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE

(THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS.)

BY THE REV. H. B. SWETE, D.D., *Regius Professor of
Divinity, Cambridge.*

“That thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.”—ST. LUKE i. 4.

THESE words explain the motive by which the author of the Third Gospel was led to compose his work, and doubtless a similar purpose was in the minds of those who wrote the First and the Second. At first it was thought sufficient to impart certain facts by word of mouth to converts who sought for Christian baptism; they were orally instructed in the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But oral teaching cannot

rise to the "certainty" of the written document; it lacks the precision of the latter, and it does not inspire equal confidence. The Church soon began to feel the need of memoirs of the events on which her faith and hope are based, and the Synoptic Gospels, as the first three of our Gospels are called, were among the early attempts which were made to supply this want.

At the outset Christianity was not a literary or book religion. Jesus Christ committed nothing to paper; on the one occasion when He is said to have written, He wrote with His finger on the dust of the Temple-court pavement. Nor did He delegate to His disciples the duty of writing down His words or actions. More than once He spoke of a future preaching of the Gospel to all nations, and He even foretold that a particular incident in His life would find a place in that preaching; but of a written Gospel there is not a word in His recorded sayings. There is nothing surprising in this, for Jewish teachers were accustomed to impress their teaching on their disciples by frequent repetition, trusting to

memory for its reproduction. On memory, then, the disciples of Christ would naturally rely for their report of His sayings and deeds. They had been promised supernatural aid in their efforts to recall them, and, as a matter of fact, the things which they had seen and heard came back to them in a surprising way. But to write down their recollections was an after-thought, which probably occurred to their converts rather than to themselves.

When the idea of writing Apostolic memoirs had once taken hold of the Church there was no lack of writers. Many took in hand to "draw up a narrative" of the Gospel history. Of these written "Gospels," as they soon came to be called, the Church accepted four only as authoritative. They are the four which we read to-day. Although no copy of our Gospels now exists which is older than the fourth century, yet they are so largely quoted by Christian writers from the middle of the second century onwards that there cannot be the slightest doubt of the substantial identity of our books with those that were read in the great centres of early Christian

life, at Rome and at Lyons, at Carthage and at Alexandria.

If it be asked to what these four Gospels owed their pre-eminence in the judgment of the second century, the answer seems to be clear: they were attributed to Apostles or to companions of Apostles. The First and the Fourth were believed to be the work of St. Matthew and St. John respectively; the Second and the Third came, it was held, from disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul.

This attribution, though so early, must not, of course, be assumed to be correct. The titles of the Gospels are not part of the originals, which are in fact anonymous. Before the claim made on their behalf by Irenæus and other early writers can be accepted, it must be subjected to rigorous criticism.

In the case of the First Gospel, the evidence as to St. Matthew's authorship is far from convincing. It is true that Papias, whose memory went back to the Apostolic age, says that "Matthew wrote the Oracles," which may mean that he wrote a Gospel.

But he adds that Matthew wrote "in the Hebrew tongue," whereas our present Gospel of St. Matthew is written in Greek, and is clearly not a translation but an original work. It cannot, therefore, be the book intended by Papias. It may, indeed, embody St. Matthew's "Oracles," or a part of them; and the persistent tradition which connects it with his name seems to point in that direction. But all that we can say with certainty is that the writer was a Palestinian Christian, and that he wrote in the first century. As to the origin of the Second Gospel we have more definite information. Papias tells us that Mark attended St. Peter as his interpreter or dragoman, and afterwards wrote down from memory the words and acts of Christ as Peter reported them in his public teaching. This statement receives apparently independent confirmation from three great centres of early Christianity, and there is some reason for believing that the Second Gospel was known to the Church as the "Memoirs of Peter," before it came to be called "the Gospel according to St. Mark." Internal evidence is

favourable to the Petrine origin of St. Mark. It is distinguished by a freshness and a movement, a simplicity and a directness, which suggest that it came from an eye-witness, and one such as St. Peter, the eager and vigilant Apostle who was our Lord's most prominent disciple.

The third of the Synoptic Gospels tells its own story. It is clearly the first part of a larger work of which the Acts of the Apostles formed the second; and though neither the Gospel nor the Acts bears the name of the author, the evidence which identifies him with Luke, the "beloved physician" of St. Paul, is sufficient to satisfy a reasonable criticism. I need not enter into the question of the Lucan authorship of the Acts, which will be discussed in another sermon.* But assuming that St. Luke wrote the Acts, he also wrote the Gospel, for it is admitted that the two books show the hand of the same author. Now St. Luke was not only a personal disciple of St. Paul, but he was with St. Paul in Palestine for some con-

* See Sermon III.

siderable time during the years 56-59; and he then had opportunities for collecting materials for his Gospel from persons who had been taught by the older Apostles, and from James the brother of the Lord. That Luke made good use of these opportunities it is fair to infer from the preface to his Gospel. We may therefore reasonably expect to find in the Third Gospel genuine reminiscences of the life of Christ gleaned on the spot, and in part at least from first-hand evidence.

We will now examine the Gospels themselves with the view of ascertaining the sources of their information. Here we shall not go far without discovering that the Synoptic Gospels contain a large proportion of common matter. If we write or print St. Mark's Gospel in a central column, placing St. Matthew and St. Luke in parallel columns on either side, it will appear that nearly the whole of St. Mark is either in St. Matthew or in St. Luke, and that the greater part is in both. But that is not all. Further examination will show that St. Mark, on the whole, is nearer to the original form of the common tradition

than either St. Matthew or St. Luke. The opinion is growing among scholars that St. Matthew and St. Luke had before them, when they wrote, either our present St. Mark, or a document closely akin to it; and that they incorporated the substance of it into their history. Thus for the whole framework of the Gospel history we are ultimately dependent upon the source whence St. Mark drew his narrative: in other words, as we have seen, upon the teaching of St. Peter.

It must not, however, be supposed that St. Matthew and St. Luke simply reproduced St. Mark. If we go through the First and Third Gospels and strike out everything that they have in common with the Second, there will still remain a large element which is common to St. Matthew and St. Luke, and also certain passages of considerable length which are peculiar to one or the other of them. The element which is common to both consists largely of discourses of our Lord, in which, you will remember, St. Mark is singularly deficient. It is to this that we owe in particular the great body of teaching which is known as

the Sermon on the Mount. From what sources the materials of the Sermon were taken we do not know; but the man who can suppose that it was produced by the Apostolic Church after the Master's death shows himself incapable of forming an opinion on questions of literary history. The sayings which compose the Sermon on the Mount are differently grouped by the two Evangelists, and to some extent differently expressed; but the teaching they embody bears unmistakable marks of having proceeded from the Master Himself. Nor can any reasonable critic doubt the origin of that great series of parables which is peculiar to St. Luke. Whatever may have been the channel through which they reached the Evangelist, there was but one mind in that age, or indeed in any other, which could have conceived the stories of the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Son, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Widow and the Judge, the Pharisee and the Publican. Renan has called St. Luke's Gospel the most beautiful book in the world. But its unique beauty is

largely due to the access possessed by St. Luke to a chapter in our Lord's life and teaching which was unknown to the other Evangelists.

The opening sections of St. Matthew and St. Luke call for special notice. The Infancy and Childhood of Christ found no place in the witness of the Apostles, whose association with our Lord did not begin till He was thirty years of age. Consequently the Petrine memoirs, our Gospel of St. Mark, are silent on this subject. To St. Peter the baptism of Christ, and not His birth, was "the beginning of the Gospel." From whence, then, did the first and third of the Evangelists obtain their information? It is to be observed that their accounts are wholly independent. They have nothing in common here beyond the bare facts of the miraculous conception, and the birth at Bethlehem; and even these are approached from different points of view. There is, therefore, a double tradition of the Infancy. The accounts are complementary, and not mutually subversive; but they have evidently come from two distinct sources. Our thoughts naturally turn to Joseph and Mary. It is

remarkable that while St. Matthew's account looks at the whole matter from Joseph's point of view, St. Luke deals with the story as it affects the Lord's mother. Throughout the story in St. Matthew St. Joseph is prominent. It is Joseph who receives the announcement of the conception ; it is Joseph who takes the Child and His mother into Egypt, who brings them back, who decides to settle in Nazareth ; whereas in St. Luke it is always Mary who is in the foreground of the picture. This fact suggests very forcibly that St. Matthew's story came from the circle of Joseph's acquaintances, while St. Luke's was derived, either directly, or through members of the Church of Jerusalem, from the Mother of Christ.

The Virgin Birth of our Lord is the subject of another sermon in this series,* and I will say no more about it now. But it raises the whole question of the Gospel miracles, and with that question I must deal as fully as time will allow.

We have seen that the verdict of the second

* See Sermon V.

century as to the origin of the Synoptic Gospels is on the whole upheld by recent research. Both external and internal evidence point to the oral teaching of the Apostles as the principal source of their contents, and to the immediate disciples of the Apostles as the circle among whom the books took their present form. They have, therefore, a strong *a priori* claim to be regarded as trustworthy records; indeed, few passages in ancient history have such early and satisfactory attestation as the story of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet there is one circumstance which, in the judgment of many persons, more than counterbalances all that can be said for the credibility of the Gospels. They are undoubtedly full of the miraculous, and the miraculous, it is widely assumed, cannot be historically true. This objection is not to be met by an attempt to shake the miracles of the Gospels apart from the rest of the history. The miracles of the Gospels are not an accretion which may be removed by critical processes, but a thread which runs through the whole tissue of the

narrative. Nor is there the slightest reason for supposing that the story was ever non-miraculous. The earliest of our Gospels, St. Mark, is not less deeply impregnated with the supernatural than the other two, and no ingenuity can purge it of miracles.

If, then, miracles are under no circumstances credible, the Gospels, notwithstanding all that has been said or can be said on their behalf, must be pronounced unhistorical, so far as they relate miraculous events. This conclusion in its crudest form has been felt by not a few serious inquirers to be intolerable, and they have sought relief from it by distinguishing between miracles of healing which may be explained by the action of the human will upon human beings brought under its power, and miracles of a cosmic or purely physical character which find no parallel in our experience. The distinction is interesting and real, and it may be welcomed by believers, because it enables many persons to accept as historical much in the Gospel story which they would otherwise have felt themselves bound to reject. "Who can say," asks Dr.

Harnack of Berlin, "how far the influence of soul upon soul and of soul upon body reaches? who can still maintain that any extraordinary phenomenon that may appear in this domain is entirely based on error and delusion?" "In our present state of knowledge," he adds, "we have become more careful, more hesitating in our judgment; . . . that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard, will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion." * This is well said, and it strikes a note which will awaken a response in many minds. But it does not dispose of the difficulty; for the miracles of the Gospels were not all wrought upon intelligent subjects able to respond to the Master's will by the answer of a personal faith. Some of them were wrought upon inanimate matter, and it has been observed that these belong to the common tradition. The stilling of the storm, the feed-

* *What is Christianity?* (Mr. T. Bailey Saunders' translation of *Das Wesen des Christentums*), p. 27f. Dr. Harnack, it is fair to say, does not believe "that a storm was quieted by a word."

ing of the five thousand, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, are all imbedded in the narrative of St. Mark. If these narratives are in their very nature incredible, it is evident that the most important of the sources of the Gospel history has been corrupted by the imagination or the dishonesty of its author.

But are miracles incredible under the circumstances which the Gospels presuppose? The Life which they describe is confessedly unique in the history of man; the Personality has no equal. In purity, in majesty, in strength, in sweetness, in love, Christ stands alone and unapproachable; His character is altogether beyond our experience; it is human, and yet superhuman; there is in it that which corresponds with our idea of the Divine. Consider whether the wonders which the Gospels attribute to the Person of Christ are not consistent with their presentation of His life. Realise to yourself, if you can, the Christ-life; place yourself in its presence, and then ask whether it still seems to you unnatural that this Man should still storms

and walk on waves and raise the dead. Both the character and the works are supernatural, that is, they are equally beyond experience; but they are consistent, they are of a piece; they form a dramatic unity which cannot be broken. The character, it will be admitted, is historical; it could not have been imagined. As little could miracles, such as Jesus is said to have wrought, have been imagined by the men of His generation; what signs of Messiahship or of Godhead they would have devised may be seen by comparing the miracles of the Apocryphal Gospels with those of the Synoptists. The Synoptic miracles display a dignity, a reserve of power, a purpose of love, a didactic aim, which are in harmony with the character of Christ, and cannot fail to impress the reader who comes to them with an open mind.

If there should be any present to whom a physical miracle is still inconceivable, even when attributed to Christ and consistent with all else that we know of Him, I would invite them to fix their thoughts for the present on the character and teaching of Jesus as they

are to be gathered out of the Gospels. Even if He never wrought a single miracle, if the stories told of His power over Nature are untrustworthy, the Person who is the centre of the Gospel narrative deserves the closest study from all thoughtful men. I venture to endorse here the counsel which Professor Harnack gave to the six hundred students at Berlin who heard his lectures on Christianity. "We must not try," he says,* "to evade the Gospel by entrenching ourselves behind the miraculous stories related by the Evangelists. . . . If there is anything here which you find unintelligible, put it quietly aside. Perhaps you will have to leave it there for ever; perhaps the meaning will dawn upon you later, and the story assume a significance of which you never dreamt." Perhaps, I will add, the day may come when you will find in the faith of the Incarnation a complete answer to your doubt.

Meanwhile, however, let us set the miracles on one side, and interrogate the Gospels on other points where we can test their trust-

* *What is Christianity?* p. 29.

worthiness. They spread before us a large canvas covered with scenes taken from the life of the time and country in which our Lord moved. This life was peculiarly complex. Let me give a single instance. From Capernaum to Jerusalem the distance is but eighty miles, as the bird flies; yet in passing from one place to the other the Lord and His disciples came under another form of government, and the physical, social, and religious conditions were also changed in many important particulars. This variety of circumstances is depicted by the Evangelists with great minuteness, not in introductory chapters or separate paragraphs, but unartificially, and as a part of the story. Incidental references of this kind expose a writer, as you know, to numerous pitfalls, unless he is either a contemporary and has been upon the spot, or has made himself intimately acquainted with the age and country of which he writes. But the scrutiny of generations of scholars has failed to detect anachronisms or other blunders in the allusions which the Gospels make to the

immediate surroundings of the Ministry and Passion. Here and there statements as to points of history and chronology have been challenged; but the local colouring, the references to strictly contemporary events, the numerous side-glances at politics and the religious questions of the day are, so far as they can be tested, true and exact. This is the more remarkable when we remember that the earliest of the Gospels was written more than thirty years after the events, and the other two after the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall and dispersion of the Jewish people. The state of things which they describe is that of the time of Christ, not that of the time of the writers; and this impression is deepened by every fresh reading of the books. I do not see how it is possible to avoid the inference that the substance and most of the setting of the Gospels is earlier by a generation at least than the date of their composition—in other words, that they, in substance, the witness of contemporaries.

The evidence of all this is in part acces-

sible only to the student. But much of it is before the eyes of every intelligent and thoughtful reader of the English Bible. Let any one who doubts the trustworthiness of the Synoptic Gospels read afresh with attention the earliest of the three, the Memoirs of Simon Peter, written by his interpreter, John Mark; and ask himself whether it does not bear upon its surface the hall-mark of reality. No book that ever was written is less a work of art, and yet none is more instinct with life. In Galilee the figures which move across the stage are those of fishermen and toll-gatherers, Rabbis from Jerusalem and courtiers from Tiberias, disciples of John and disciples of Jesus, and a mixed crowd brought by the great roads from all parts of Palestine. We follow the Master into the Synagogue, or into Peter's house, or as He passes along the shore or steps into the boat. His teaching is full of the surroundings in the midst of which He moves. We see the sower or the reaper at work in the cornfields upon the hills above the Lake, the mustard plant growing

to the size of a tree in the rich plain of Gennesaret, the peasants' houses scantily furnished with bed and pallet, lamp and lampstand, wine-skin and cup; the wayfaring man passes by with his girded tunic, with sandals on his feet, and a wallet slung across his back; before us is the little lake, usually still and smiling, but at times thrown into wild disorder by gales sweeping down upon it from the western hills; on the eastern shore are the downs on which the swineherds feed their charge, and from which now and again a savage maniac, who has made this wilderness his dwelling-place, rushes out upon the traveller. We pass from Galilee, and all is changed. We are in the Temple-court, and we see the money-changers and the vendors of sacrifices at their work, and the country folk from Bethany carrying their wares across the court on their way to the city. The Scribes are no longer, as in Galilee, the leaders of society; in Jerusalem the place of honour belongs to the chief priests, and the Pharisees are confronted by the Sadducees, of whom little or nothing was heard in the North. It

is in the Temple, and not in the Synagogue or the open country, that the crowd collects to hear the Master teach. This faithfulness to the surroundings of the narrative makes for the general trustworthiness of the sources.

Can the Gospels be equally trusted when they draw the picture of their central character? Is the Christ, as they portray Him, an historic person, or is He the creation of the Evangelists, or of their Apostolic predecessors? It is not uncommon for disciples to glorify their master when he is gone, until their loyal appreciation grows into a cult, and a false lustre is shed upon words or deeds which do not rise above ordinary standards. May not something of this kind have occurred in reference to the Synoptic portraiture of Christ? May it not be a glorified image of Jesus of Nazareth, and not a true likeness of His very self? Such a view may plausibly, though not, I think, rightly, be taken of the presentation of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, or in the Epistles of St. Paul; but it will not bear examination in connection with the Synoptic Gospels. The Synoptic

Christ calls Himself the Son of man, a name which is but once or twice given to Him by His followers. He reveals His Messiahship only by degrees, and not publicly until just before the end. He lives with the Twelve on terms of intimacy; Peter once even ventures to rebuke Him. His Transfiguration is the one occasion on which His superhuman glory is revealed, and the three witnesses are forbidden to speak of it during His lifetime. He is "meek and lowly in heart"; He is at home with poor folk and little children; He sends the rich empty away. Adoration is rarely offered to Him; He does not even accept the title of "Good Master," without protesting against a possible misapprehension. This is not such a conception of Christ as could have originated in the Apostolic age. Still less was it suggested by Jewish expectations; a Messiah who refused a crown, who lived the life of an itinerant teacher, who suffered the death of the Cross, was not such a Messiah as any Jew of the time looked for or desired. Whence, then, came the picture of the Christ which the three Synoptic Gospels consistently

offer? I can see no escape from the conclusion that it was drawn from life. The Central Figure of the Gospel story, no less than the surroundings, bears the stamp of truth.

The Christian faith does not stand or fall with the trustworthiness of the Gospels. If it could be proved that the Gospels were the work of the second century, and of little value as historical documents, the Church would have lost one line of defence; but others would remain. The Gospel was preached to the world before a single Gospel was written, and the Gospel would continue to be preached if all the written Gospels were discredited or destroyed. There would remain the witness of the Church and Sacraments; there would remain the witness of the Spirit of Christ in the individual life: "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." There would remain also the work of Christ in the world, and the *gesta Christi*, the great effects wrought by Christianity upon the world, which have raised modern life with all its faults so immeasurably above the standard

of purity attained by Greece and Rome. The men who think that they strike a deadly blow at Christianity by casting doubt on the Gospels, altogether miscalculate the strength of the Christian position. Nevertheless they are capable of inflicting grievous injury upon those who are influenced by their representations. Such persons often cast away, together with their faith in the Gospels, all belief in the supreme claim of Christ; or, at best, Christ becomes for them a mere symbol for vague and uncertain ideals of goodness. Never was it more imperative that Christians should possess a definite faith resting on a sure foundation of fact. It is an age of rapid change, of transition from the old order to a new; all knowledge is called in question; all beliefs go into the crucible of an exacting, yet often hasty and imperfect analysis. In religion, at least, we need to feel the ground under our feet; we must have, if not certainty, yet such relative security as the nature of the case allows. It was in order that the Church might for all time possess that security that the Gospels were written. Read them

with serious attention. Read them with the simple desire of knowing and obeying the truth, and they will work in you a growing conviction, strong enough for the needs of your personal life, that the Christ to whom they bear witness is a great reality, that the story of His life and death and resurrection is not a fable cunningly devised, or idly imagined, but a splendid and a saving fact.

BOOKS FOR STUDY AND REFERENCE.

THE following are a few of the best known and most accessible books in English upon the study of the Synoptic Gospels. An asterisk has been placed before those which are suitable for readers who are beginning the study of the subject.

1. THE TEXT OF THE GOSPELS SYNOPTICALLY ARRANGED.

- *Abbott and Rushbrooke, *The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels* (in the Revised Version). Or,
- *Wright, *Synopsis of the Gospels in Greek* (Macmillan).
- Rushbrooke, *Synopticon* (Macmillan).

2. ON THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

- *Robinson, *On the Study of the Gospels* (Longmans).
- *Bennett and Adeney, *Biblical Introduction*, N. T. ch. ii. (Methuen).

*Sanday, *Book by Book: the Synoptic Gospels* (Isbister).

Woods, *Origin and Mutual Relation of the Synoptic Gospels*, in *Studia Biblica* II. (Clarendon Press).

Sanday, *Gospels* (Supplement), in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, edition 2 (Murray).

Sanday, *Survey of the Synoptic Question*, in the *Expositor*, IV. iii. (Hodder and Stoughton).

Stanton, *Gospels*, in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (T. and T. Clark).

Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ* (Clarendon Press).

3. ON INTRODUCTION.

*Bennett and Adeney, *Biblical Introduction*, N. T. ch. i. (Methuen).

*Bacon, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Macmillan Co., N.Y.).

Westcott, *Introduction to the Gospels* (Macmillan).

Salmon, *Introduction to the New Testament: Lectures* i.-xi. (Murray).

Weiss, *Manual of Introduction to the New Testament* (Hodder and Stoughton).

4. ON THE LIFE, TEACHING, AND TIMES OF JESUS CHRIST.

*Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Longmans).

*Latham, *Pastor Pastorum* (Deighton and Bell).

*Moorhouse, *The Teaching of Christ* (Macmillan).

*Stapfer, *Palestine in the Time of Christ* (Hodder and Stoughton).

Sanday, *Jesus Christ*, in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (T. and T. Clark).

Weiss, *Life of Christ* (T. and T. Clark).

Schüser, *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (T. and T. Clark).

Dalman, *Words of Jesus* (T. and T. Clark).

5. ON OTHER SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS.

**Criticism of the New Testament*, Lectures by Sanday, Kenyon, Burkitt, Chase, Headlam, J. H. Bernard (Murray).

*Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient MSS.* (Eyre and Spottiswoode).

Kenyon, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Macmillan).

Westcott, *History of the Canon of the New Testament* (Macmillan).

Sanday, *Inspiration* (Longmans).

Smith, G. A., *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (Hodder and Stoughton).

Turner, *Chronology of the New Testament*, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (T. and T. Clark).

III

THE AUTHORITY AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

III

THE AUTHORITY AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BY THE REV. R. J. KNOWLING, D.D., *Professor of New
Testament Exegesis at King's College, London.*

“We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that
we have seen.”—ST. JOHN iii. 11.

IN studying the book of the Acts of the Apostles the question for us as Churchmen is, not why we should receive it, as being what it claims to be, but why we should not receive it. Here is a book which comes to us with the best credentials of external and internal evidence, if we regard it as a mere literary production, and the weight of proof lies with those who maintain the contrary.

Let us look at a few points in this mass of testimony to the authorship of the Acts,

and to its claim upon our acceptance. In the earliest document which gives us anything like a list of books in the New Testament—the Muratorian Canon (the earliest, at all events, which has come to us, although not perhaps the earliest composed)—so called because published in 1740 A.D. by Muratori, the librarian at Milan—we find both the Third Gospel and the Acts referred definitely to St. Luke the Physician (*medicus*), who was called the companion of St. Paul. As the Muratorian Fragment, which may probably be placed about 170–180 A.D., is but a fragment, we may be grateful that its record is so decisive. It shows us that the claims of the books mentioned had been previously weighed; and it should be further borne in mind that this list probably dates, not from any obscure corner of the Church, but from Rome, the capital of the Empire. Moreover, this testimony, which comes to us at all events from the close of the second century, is supported by testimony from all quarters of the Church. It is the testimony borne by St. Irenæus, who may be fairly said to represent three

Churches—Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul; it is the testimony of Tertullian, representing the African Church, and of St. Clement of Alexandria, who not only represents, of course, his own Church, but appeals to the different teachers from whom he received the traditions handed down from father to son. As St. Clement's testimony to the use of the New Testament books in the Church has been subjected to depreciatory criticism by Dr. Harnack, it is, perhaps, worth noting that Harnack's objections are answered in detail by Dr. Sanday in the opening lecture and accompanying notes of his volume on Inspiration. So far as Acts is concerned, St. Clement distinctly ascribes it to St. Luke, and quotes repeatedly from it. This testimony may be easily supplemented, as, for example, by that of Polycrates of Ephesus at the close of the second century, who gives us what seems to be a verbatim reminiscence of Acts, "We ought to obey God rather than men," whilst he also emphasises the primitive traditions which he had received.

One other testimony is of peculiar and

pathetic interest. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius there arose a bitter persecution against the Christians—a persecution which affected the Churches of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, in which you may remember the youthful Ponticus, a boy of 15, and a poor slave girl, Blandina, suffered together for their faith in Christ. Fortunately, we are in possession of a letter about 177 A.D. from these Churches to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, describing their sufferings, bearing testimony to the unity of doctrine between the Churches of Asia Minor, Gaul, and Rome, and containing what certainly seems undoubted reference amongst other books to St. Luke i. 6, and to Acts vii. 60, the dying prayer of St. Stephen, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” In this letter even the Dutch critic, Van Manen, who makes such a clean sweep of nearly all early Christian literature, is constrained to find fresh and historical recollections, and to date it probably at the close of the second century.

Consider (1) the width of area comprised in this testimony; (2) that it comes to us from

persons many of whom were engaged in religious controversy, and who were in close touch with various parts of the Christian world.

Moreover, we are in the peculiarly strong position of being able to appeal, as is the case in the attacks on the Gospel of St. John, not only to orthodox, but also to heretical testimony. It is a noteworthy fact that, although this Book of Acts was rejected by several heretics of the second century, it was rejected not because its authorship was disputed, but because its authorship was so firmly established. In quarters, for example, where attacks were made upon St. Paul's apostolic claims, it was obviously important to question the authority of his intimate disciple. The famous Gnostic sect, the Valentinians, St. Irenæus tells us, accepted the Acts as authoritative, but tried to explain away its meaning by fantastic interpretations, and so, as Bishop Lightfoot puts it, these Valentinians are valuable witnesses, all the more valuable because the acceptance of this book involved them in great difficulty.

But this heretical testimony, even if it stood alone, would enable us to carry back the date of Acts to a considerably earlier period than the Muratorian Fragment.

The heretic Marcion, about 140 A.D., issued a mutilated copy of the Gospel of St. Luke. This is now acknowledged on all sides. It is evident, therefore, that even at that date our Third Gospel must not only have existed, but that it must have already gained high and wide authority for Marcion to make it a basis for his mutilated work. But Marcion, it may be said, rejected Acts. Yes; but there is no evidence that he denied its authorship. Marcion rejected the book because it represented Paul as meeting the other Apostles on friendly terms, while Marcion maintained a direct antagonism between them; and it should not be forgotten that in answering Marcion's position St. Irenæus refers to the Acts as if both he and his opponents equally accepted its Lucan authorship.

Moreover, it is quite fair to say that evidence for the Third Gospel is also evidence for the Acts, and that all the evidence available

for either book singly is available for the other book also. Even the most destructive of recent critics, after affirming that Luke's true name and home remain unknown, are constrained to add that there is no necessity for doubting the correctness of the representation that he is one and the same with the author of the Third Gospel.

It may also be noted that until the close of the ninth century not a single word was uttered which could throw doubt upon the acknowledged claim of Luke to be the author of both Gospel and Acts. In that century Photius the learned Patriarch of Constantinople has the statement that "Some say that the writer of the Acts was Clement of Rome, others Barnabas, others Luke the Evangelist"; but it is no unreasonable supposition that Photius is apparently transferring to Acts conjectures about the authorship of the Hebrews; and it must never be forgotten that when reference is made to this statement of Photius the whole of it should be quoted (which is not done, if I remember rightly, by the author of *Supernatural Religion*), for

Photius proceeds thus: "But Luke himself decides the question, for at the beginning of his preface he mentions that another treatise containing the Acts of the Lord had been composed by him." It would seem, therefore, that Photius was far enough from any adverse position as to Luke's authorship of Acts, and that he was quite positive that the Third Gospel had been composed by that Evangelist.

But this inference from Marcion's position as to the existence and acceptance of Acts in the earlier part of the second century may be strengthened and confirmed by evidence which compels us, it is not too much to say, to carry back the book within the lines of the first century. In early Christian literature no books are more interesting than those called Apologies. In the middle of the second century we may place the famous Apologist, Justin Martyr. There are many points of probable coincidence between the Acts and Justin Martyr's writings, but if it is true that the summary of events after the Crucifixion as given by Justin seems to be taken from

Acts i., we have here a peculiarly valuable coincidence, because in writing a defence of the main facts of his belief, in an Apology addressed to a Roman Emperor, Justin would not have been likely to select a summary from a suspicious or disputed quarter.

But, passing higher up the stream of evidence, we come to the writings of St. Polycarp and St. Ignatius, and we have in each resemblances to the language of our book which some advanced critics such as Holtzmann and Wendt seem unable to dispose of. And, finally, we pass to the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome, placed by Harnack, about 95 A.D. This epistle is a somewhat awkward document for Van Manen. But just as he informs us that we possess no writings of Ignatius or Polycarp, so he rejects the Epistle of St. Clement, whilst his American follower, W. B. Smith, asks us to place it anywhere between 96-135 A.D. !

Now in Acts xiii. 22 we have three features introduced into the writer's use of Psalm lxxxix. 20 which are not found in the original of the Psalm. These features are the

mention of the "witness," and two additions, (a) "a man after my heart"; (b) the son of Jesse: "To whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart." But when we turn to *Clem. Rom. Cor.* xviii. 1, we read: "What shall we say of David, to whom witness is borne, unto whom God said, I have found a man after my heart, David, the son of Jesse?" Here we find the same three features, none of which have a place in the original passage of the Psalm. This, it is admitted, cannot have been accidental. In another passage St. Clement writes, "More gladly giving than receiving," which certainly reads like a reminiscence of Acts xx. 35; and elsewhere he exhorts his readers as those "specially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake," which looks like another reminiscence of Acts xx. 35, the same verb being used in each case. These references are of considerable weight, and we do not wonder that the author of the article "Acts" in the new *Encyclopædia Britannica* should affirm that it seems from this echo of Acts xx. 35, that Acts

was already known and read in Rome before the close of the first century.

Before we pass on it is worth noting that the language of the *Didache*, dating probably from the early years of the second century, often presents a very close resemblance to that of St. Peter's first sermon, and to the early chapters of Acts. Indeed this primitive character of some of the contents of these early chapters has so impressed even hostile critics that we are told that the Christology of St. Peter's addresses must have come from a primitive source.

Moreover, there is another vein of evidence which has not yet been fully worked. I refer not only to the contrast between the accuracy of our Canonical Acts and the blunders of the Apocryphal Acts of the second or later centuries, but to the fact that these Apocryphal books are evidently based upon our Acts, and not our Acts upon them. Professor Ramsay has made us all more familiar with the story of St. Paul and Thekla, a romance which appears to be really part of the *Acta Pauli* of the second century,

for the full translation of which we are still waiting; and if it is true to say that the best "apology" for our Canonical Gospels is the Apocryphal, it may surely be said with equal truth that the best "apology" for the Canonical Acts is the Apocryphal. One further point in this external evidence deserves attention. It should never be forgotten that Acts finds a place in many important versions in the second century, and that it is also contained, like the Gospels, in the five great Uncial MSS. Contrast this with the MS. evidence upon which we receive many of the works of the great classical writers. Our Uncial MSS. of the New Testament carry us back at least to the fourth or fifth centuries; our versions and texts to the second and third. But our oldest complete MS. of Homer dates from the thirteenth century; all that we possess of Sophocles is contained in a single MS. of the eighth or ninth century; there is no known MS. of Herodotus or of Thucydides earlier than the tenth century. For the first six books of the *Annals of Tacitus* we have no MS. earlier than the ninth century, and

this MS. was not published until the sixteenth. From another point of view this same balance of evidence in favour of the New Testament books may be clearly attested. We have, for example, no written voucher to the Roman satirist Juvenal until nearly three centuries after his death. If we compare this with the definite references, say, in the Muratorian Fragment to the Acts as the work of St. Luke the Physician, we again see plainly upon which side the balance lies.

Against all this variety of external evidence what can be placed? Of late years we have heard much of the dependence of St. Luke upon Josephus. To examine this alleged dependence would demand much more time than is at our command, and it will therefore perhaps be sufficient to make one or two general remarks. In the first place, it is not antecedently impossible that two writers of the same period often concerned with the same events should present some points of contact; but it is a little one-sided to conclude that Josephus must always be right and St. Luke always wrong, especially when we bear

in mind how often St. Luke's accuracy has been tested, and successfully tested, of late years, as even Schmiedel is constrained to acknowledge. In many places, for example, in their description of Herod Agrippa in Acts xii., it is not too much to say trustworthiness, truthfulness, independence, are all marked in St. Luke's narrative, and that this independence may often be seen elsewhere in comparing the two writers. In the next place it is highly improbable that a man of St. Luke's culture should have made Josephus a model of style and language. Josephus, let us remember, himself informs us that when he was preparing his materials for the history of the Jewish War, he had to obtain the assistance of others in order to learn Greek. A man who could write the prologue to St. Luke's Gospel would scarcely have gone to school to Josephus. Moreover, whatever likeness of style and language 'does exist may often be accounted for by the very obvious and undeniable fact that both writers have made the Septuagint their study. The author of *Supernatural Religion* claims in his new

edition to have proved a dependence of St. Luke upon Josephus. Josephus furnished St. Luke with material for drawing the character of Ananias. Ananias commanded those who stood by to strike Paul on the mouth. So in Josephus, the servants of the high priests strike those priests who would not give up their tithes. An argument can scarcely be very convincing which stands in need of such parallels as these.

At the close of his article on Josephus in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* Dr. Edersheim has a striking passage: "Josephus must, during his stay in Rome, have become acquainted with the works and aims of St. Paul. These things had not been done in a corner, and the activity of the prisoner of Christ during those two years must have been known and felt in the Ghetto. But what a contrast between these two men, who were at the same time in Rome, each professing to be a true Israelite and to love his people—all the more striking from the circumstances that each had well-nigh perished by shipwreck before reaching the shores of Italy." Bearing

these remarks in mind it is surely not improbable that Josephus may have made use of Christian sources, even if Dr. Belser, one of the most reverent and able of Romanist theologians in Germany, goes too far in maintaining that he may have read St. Luke's writings. The reference to the shipwreck of Josephus on a similar voyage to that of St. Paul and St. Luke, may at least well account for the introduction of some similar nautical terms and descriptions by the two historians.

Now let us turn to the book itself and inquire what it may tell us as to its authorship. And here it is not too much to say at the outset that even if the opponents of the book could prove that the references to it in early Church writers must be very seriously discounted, yet the contents are in themselves sufficient to convince us that we are in possession of at least some genuine record dating from Apostolic days.

The author of the ninety-seven verses which form the "We" sections evidently claims to be a companion of St. Paul? Who was he? Even the most destructive critics do not seem

to be able altogether to ignore the likelihood of the claims made for St. Luke. Thus Dr. Schmiedel, after dismissing Titus, says that it is still more conceivable that the author of the journey record was St. Luke—the chief suspicious circumstances being that he should refer to Jewish feasts and fasts. But it was perfectly natural that a Gentile Christian should refer to such feasts and fasts, when he was travelling and associating with men likely to retain, as born Jews would be, some of the religious associations with which they were familiar. If, on the other hand, the notes of time and plan in Acts had been of an entirely different character, we should no doubt have been told that the writer, while claiming to have travelled in the company of Jews, knew nothing whatever of Jewish feasts and fasts! Van Manen is even more positive than Schmiedel, and speaks of the journey narrative as being very possibly the work of Luke, the companion of Paul.

It certainly seems strange on the face of it that some late writer, whose true name remains unknown, whose home may have been

in Rome or Asia Minor, and who flourished anyhow about the second quarter of the second century—within a few years, *i.e.* of the acceptance of the Third Gospel by Marcion—should have got hold of this important diary, and should have incorporated it boldly in Acts, altering it as he chose. But it is equally strange that this diary should have survived so long for its use in this curious manner, and that it should then, in spite of its immense value, have been lost to the Church altogether.

Moreover, when we come to examine these “We” sections, we find ourselves face to face with the fact that their language is so closely allied to that of the rest of the book as to make it more than probable that their author was identical with the author of Acts and of the Third Gospel.

Thus we have no less than twenty-one words and phrases which are found only in these “We” sections and in the rest of Acts; sixteen words and phrases found only in the “We” sections and Luke, with or without the rest of Acts also; twenty-eight words and

phrases found in the "We" sections which also occur predominantly, though not exclusively, in the rest of Acts, or Luke, or either of them.* It may, perhaps, be urged that some one boldly introduced these "We" sections to create the impression that the writer was the author of the whole book. But if so, would he have been content with the mere pronoun? The author of the Apocryphal "Gospel of Peter" has also his "We" sections, but he also speaks of himself quite definitely—"but, I, Simon Peter and Andrew my brother."

In addition to this, it may be affirmed without hesitation that amongst the known companions of St. Paul, all that we know of St. Luke fits in with the requirements demanded for the authorship of Acts.

The claims of Silas have been again very recently advocated by a distinguished scholar. But to say nothing of the fact that, according to Acts, Silas is not found at all in the third missionary journey, the identification of Luke and Silas does not seem to bear examination.

* Sir J. Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ*, p. 150.

When one considers all the other improbabilities connected with the claims of Silas,—such, *e.g.*, the mentioning of himself in Acts xv. 22 as one of the chief men among the brethren—most of us will prefer the severe blow dealt by Lightfoot to the attempted revival of this theory in more recent days. And if St. Luke was not the author, why should his name have become associated in the first place with the Gospel, and then with the Acts? He was not, so far as we know, a follower of our Lord, and rationalist critics are never tired of telling us that we know little or nothing about him.

But if Church tradition describes the author of these two books as a medical man, let us remember that the language of the books in question supplies a remarkable corroboration of this tradition. This subject of the medical language of St. Luke will reward the closest inquiry. The most notable fact is, perhaps, that in many instances in which we are able to place side by side the language of the Synoptic Gospels, it will be found that St. Luke introduces a distinctly

medical term which finds no place in St. Matthew or St. Mark.

Each of the Synoptists, for instance, gives our Lord's saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." St. Matthew and St. Mark have exactly the same word for needle; while St. Luke in his text introduces a combination of two medical terms which is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Neither word occurs in the Septuagint, but both words are used technically by medical men, and not only so, but the same combination is found as occurs in St. Luke; one was the usual medical word for a perforation of any kind; the other denotes the surgical needle employed in surgical operations. It is surely of interest to note that this instance is so striking that it has been recently endorsed by one of the greatest of German textual critics: "The choice of the terms betrays the language of the physician."*

I do not, of course, mean to say that all difficulties connected with Acts vanish immediately we are convinced that St. Luke

* Nestle, *Textual Criticism*, p. 275.

is the author. There are alleged inconsistencies between the narrative of Acts and some of the notices in St. Paul's Epistles ; and it is urged that these inconsistencies are incompatible with the belief that the former book was written by a companion of St. Paul. But some of these difficulties are materially lessened when we remember that the writer of a history might often purport to describe events from a different point of view from that of the writer of a letter. In the famous difficulty as to the identification of Galatians ii. with Acts xv., the account of the Jerusalem Council, it is quite possible that in the former case, in the Epistle, we have a private notice, in the Acts a public notice of the same event ; and the two accounts, so far from contradicting one another, in reality supplement each other. No recent theory defeats this possibility. It is accepted by two of the most recent English critics, Dr. Chase and Dr. Rackham, but it will undoubtedly in future have to face the acute criticism of Dr. Weber, who is at one with Professor Ramsay in identifying Galatians ii. with Acts xii. 25.

This identification, if correct, would, of course, involve no contradiction. But if the writer of Acts had been composing his work at a late date, when at least some of St. Paul's Epistles were known and quoted in the Church, would he not have removed, or at least explained, these alleged and apparent inconsistencies by a few strokes of his pen? Moreover, those critics who dwell so much upon supposed contradictions tell us little or nothing of the remarkable coincidences between the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul, and one might often suppose that they were entirely ignorant that such a book as Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ* had ever been written. But it was once said by Dean Stanley that while much of the argument of Paley's *Evidences* must change its value with the state of feeling and reasoning in different ages of the world, the argument of the *Horæ Paulinæ* will stand fast for all ages alike.

Or again: we ask what was St. Luke's purpose in writing, and why does he end so abruptly? In connection with this latter point it is very possible that St. Luke meant to write

a third treatise, and this view has received, and is receiving, considerable and weighty support.

It should be remembered in this context that St. Luke gives us at the close of his Gospel a brief reference to an event, the Ascension, which he expands in the opening chapter of Acts. In the same manner it is quite possible that the brief reference to the Apostle's imprisonment at the close of the Acts may have been meant to appear again in the commencement of a third book as an introduction to St. Paul's work and preaching in Rome and in the West. It is also quite possible to cite from ancient writers more than one parallel instance of a writer giving a repeated account of one and the same event. Josephus in the close of *Antiquities*, bk. xvii., makes a brief reference to the sending of Qurinius to Syria and Palestine, and then commences book xviii. with a longer and more circumstantial record of the same incident. It may, of course, be said that this mention of a third treatise only leaves a very few years for the contents of this supposed continuation of the history.

But it is very likely that St. Luke would have loved to dwell at length upon St. Paul's doings in the capital of the Empire, especially when we remember the stress laid by St. Paul himself upon seeing Rome; and he may also have wished to expand at some length St. Paul's preaching of the Gospel in the West, in Spain, for instance, an event the possibility of which is now frankly admitted by Dr. Harnack, especially when we remember that Rom. xv. shows us how earnestly St. Paul desired to make this journey, and that Spain has been described on high authority as by far the most Romanised district of the Empire.

Moreover, St. Luke as a true historian may well be supposed to have judged events in relation, not to their duration, but to their importance; indeed, St. Luke on the whole is much less interested in chronology than a modern writer, and in this defect, if it is one, he was not altogether removed from his age and time. Tacitus, for example, in his *Agricola* gives us no chronological data until we reach the final chapter.

It must not, however, be forgotten that

there is much to be said for the position still strongly advocated by famous scholars, both in England and Germany, that St. Luke wrote no more, because at the time he knew no more. This will, of course, require us to place the date of Acts in the earlier sixties. But whatever may be said as to the date, or whether we regard Acts as a second volume of a series, or as the latter of two treatises, may it not be fairly maintained that it commences with the utterance of a definite prophecy and concludes with a definite fulfilment of that utterance? "Ye shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth." The latter expression, "the ends of the earth," may fairly mean Rome, as it is the precise phrase used for Rome in the Jewish book, the *Psalms of Solomon*, dating within some half century or so of our Lord's birth. The Twelve had borne their witness in Jerusalem, in all Judæa, and in Samaria; St. Paul was to carry the witness further, before the Gentiles and Kings, as well as in Jerusalem: "As thou hast testified concerning Me in Jerusalem, so

must thou also bear witness in Rome" (Acts xxiii. 11). In these words our Lord Himself seems to signify what was to be the crowning point of St. Paul's ministry in the Gospel, the *Apex Evangelii*; and St. Luke's second treatise leaves the Apostle of the Gentiles not only in Rome, but "preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ" (xxviii. 31).

This view of the book is in full accordance with the fact that St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, wrote with his eye fixed upon the Roman Empire, that he chooses for the furtherance of the Gospel the great Roman highways and commercial centres; and that Luke, on his part, has selected the facts connected with the growth of the Church of Jerusalem into the Church of the Empire. Such a view accounts for many of St. Luke's omissions; for the omission, for example, of the growth of the Church in Egypt and Ethiopia, in the East and South. But there is no difficulty in admitting that St. Luke may have written, not only as an historian, but as an apologist, to show that the Imperial

government was not assailed by the new religion, with the purpose of reassuring those who had been already instructed in the Christian faith, and to prove its spiritual power and high moral purpose before the rulers of this world. Dr. Belser has ingeniously argued that this purpose may be seen in the choice of a cultured Roman like Theophilus, who would be well able to introduce the subject of Christianity to his own social circle; and he refers to the ingenious interpretation of another Romanist writer, who finds in the expression of the Muratorian Fragment that Luke was a man, *juris studiosus*, devoted to the Law, an intimation that St. Paul's choice was made because Luke, as a skilful advocate, would be able to put forth in his writings the strength of the Christian case. But it must be admitted that the reference to these words *juris studiosus* is capable of a different explanation.

Time forbids me to dwell upon the many strange theories which have been maintained by various sceptical writers as showing the

object of the author of Acts. In earlier days we were told that it was a "tendency" writing composed by a Pauline Christian in a conciliatory spirit to reconcile the Jewish and Pauline parties in the Church. The latest modern theory requires us to believe that the contents of the book may be partitioned between, say, some half-dozen authors, each revising and correcting the work of the other, each leaving mistakes so glaring and palpable that each succeeding *redactor* could remove them by a stroke of his pen. What then becomes of the model of unity and individuality of style which so impressed the earlier critics?

Closely connected with the conciliatory tendency theories is the view that the writer of Acts wished to institute a parallel between Peter and Paul, and to assert the equality of one with the other. But there is surely nothing strange in the fact that there should be a certain amount of parallelism in the lives of the two great Christian missionaries and Apostles. And if St. Luke and St. Peter met at Rome, as is quite possible, it was

likely enough that the historian should have been specially struck with passages in St. Peter's life which resembled those in St. Paul's career. But this is a different thing from maintaining that the Acts was composed for the mere purpose of instituting and elaborating this parallel. If we refuse our credit to biographical and historical parallels, we may find ourselves in an awkward position. Some seventeen years ago or so, the members of the Liberal Party in England called themselves Liberal Unionists. In our own days, a considerable number of the same party are called Liberal Imperialists. Is the future political historian, say some Radical apologist, to maintain that the dissension of the Liberal Imperialists had no existence because we are told that they were led, as in the case of the Liberal Unionists, by a distinguished peer and a distinguished commoner? Because, in other words, Lord Rosebery and Mr. Asquith are described as the leaders in the one case, and the Duke of Devonshire and Mr. Chamberlain in the other? I have referred to the supposed parallelism theory, not because it

is more worthy of consideration now than in the days when Dr. Salmon of Dublin exposed it to his ridicule, but because even the most recent and adverse critics of Acts seem more or less unable to get away from it.

At the same time, it is not unfair to observe that, whilst this is the case, they will find it still more difficult to get rid of the remarkable impression produced by the continuous study of the Book of Acts. A very able and reverent Romanist theologian in Germany, Dr. V. Weber, to whom reference has already been made, commences his remarks in a recent magazine article by pointing out what he justly calls a cause of rejoicing for believers in the fact that Acts has lately been so strongly defended, in a greater or less degree, by noted philologists and historians. He mentions four names in illustration: the name of Professor Ramsay, who, as we all know, values St. Luke as an historian of the first rank; the name of Professor Blass, whose Commentary on Acts, with its strong defence of the Lucan author-

ship, is as widely read in England as in Germany; the name of the world-renowned philologist, Professor Curtius of Berlin, who affirms, in speaking of St. Paul at Athens, that whoever refuses to admit the historical character of the narrative in Acts tears one of the weightiest pages out of the history of humanity; the name of Professor Mommsen, who regards the account of the missionary journeys as, on the whole, a contemporary and trustworthy record.

Here, then, are the names of four men, not one of whom can be said, as is sometimes said of the clergy, to hold a brief for a creed, all of whom have approached the subject with all the prestige of classical learning and scholarship, and all of whom have helped in their several ways to strengthen our belief in the value of St. Luke's history, and of his loving appreciation of the genius and work of St. Paul. In this book we have the sole historical authority for the impressions and actions wrought by the earliest proclamation that Jesus was the Christ. To this book we have recourse when we want to know some-

thing of the life of mutual love and fellowship and of the unity in doctrine and worship which characterised the first believers in the Risen Saviour; and although as we read the familiar description, we feel that there hath passed a glory from the earth, we still look wistfully back upon the picture, and try to catch something of its beauty and brightness. To this book we have recourse when we are eager to rekindle a true missionary enthusiasm, a self-devotion high and pure, for the Church both at home and abroad. In its pages we hear the glad assurance, "I have much people in this city," when the sins and miseries of a greater and stranger world than that of Corinth appal us with their magnitude and tempt us to despair; in its pages we learn, by one definite example after another, how the Church of Christ with its message of joy and peace, and yet with its unconditional demand of repentance and faith, can transform our human nature from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit.

Once more, to this same book we have recourse when we desire to see in what

relationship the Apostles first stood to the great facts of our Lord's Incarnate Life. These were not for them "dead facts stranded on the shore of the oblivious years"; God had already spoken by mighty works and wonders and signs in the midst of Judæa and Jerusalem, and now He was also speaking by a further manifestation of Divine power, interpreting and illumining: "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him." And for us, as for them, obedience will still be the sole condition of growth in religious knowledge, and the test of loyalty and devotion to a living and loving Lord.

For purposes of study the following may be mentioned:—

Articles "Acts," in Dr. Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*; in the 2nd edition of Smith's *Bible Dictionary*; in the new edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and "Lukas der Evangelist" in the new edition of Herzog's *Encyclopædia*.

Also the articles "Paul" and "Peter" in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, and the various articles by Professor Ramsay, e.g., "Corinth," "Ephesus," "Galatia," in the same Dictionary.

To these may be added not only Professor Ramsay's larger books, but also Part III. in *Was Christ born at Bethlehem? The Credibility of Acts*, by Dr. Chase; the Lecture by Dean Bernard in *St. Margaret's Lectures*; Dr. Salmon's *Introduction*, Lect. xviii.; Dr. Zahn's *Einleitung*, ii. p. 333 ff.; Dr. Plummer's *Introduction to Gospel of St. Luke*; Archbishop Benson's *Addresses*.

For the recent literature on *Acts*, see *Critical Review*, Nov., 1902, by Dr. Plummer; the *Church Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1901, and Jan., 1903; *Expository Times*, Jan., 1901; and the *Journal of Theological Studies*, July, 1902.

Amongst Commentaries proper may be mentioned those by Plumptre, Rackham, Vernon Bartlet, Page, and Walpole; and on the *Greek* text those by Blass, Rendall, Page (latest edition), Lumby, and *Expositor's Greek Test*. ii. (to which may be added the articles on St. Luke's Medical Language in *American Biblical World*, 1902).

IV

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST

IV

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

BY THE REV. DR. A. ROBERTSON, *Principal of King's
College, London, Bishop-Elect of Exeter.*

“Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.”—1 COR. xv. 11.

WITH these words St. Paul clinches his reminder to the Corinthians of the primary elements of the Gospel, common to himself and to the twelve, which he had planted at Corinth years before as the foundation there, as elsewhere, of the Christian brotherhood. These elementary truths comprised, as you will recollect, the death of Christ for our sins and the fact that He had risen the third day from His grave. This latter fact, the resurrection, nobody at Corinth, so far as it would

seem, had actually questioned; but the Corinthians, or some of them, none the less needed to be reminded of it—reminded of its primary place in the Apostolic message, reminded of the chain of testimony which had commended it to their original acceptance. Some among them were sitting loosely to it, in so far as they were questioning doctrines which followed from it as effect follows from cause.

St. Paul's purpose in the passage of which our text is the conclusion, is to tighten the hold of his readers upon this primary truth, in order to carry them along with him afterwards in his intended vindication of the doctrine that followed in its train.

It is well that we should bear in mind this historical situation as we discuss, with all the candour and thoroughness possible in the time at our disposal, the nature and value of the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We are discussing, remember, not the evidence for some ecclesiastical miracle, not the evidence for an apostolic miracle, nor for a miracle of the Gospel record,

the absence of which, had it been unrecorded, would but slightly have affected the message delivered by the Apostles and received by all Christians from the first. We are discussing no fact, momentous perhaps in its importance, but yet only emphasized in Apostolic teaching after the first foundations of elementary faith had been well and truly laid—no aftermath of the “things concerning Jesus.” We are discussing a fact which formed, so far as any available records inform us, the very centre of the first preaching of Christ by His Apostles, a fact, belief in which drew together the first community of the disciples, which formed their one sufficient justification in any claims they advanced on behalf of their Master, a fact the negation of which was the denial of their very ground of existence. “If Christ be not risen,” so they said, “then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

This was how the first preachers of our religion in their very first utterances as its heralds regarded the matter. I do not remind you of this simple historical truth in order to

bias your consideration of the questions to be discussed as we proceed, but in order to make you realise the vastness of the issue before us. We are not dealing with a matter of opinion which can be decided one way or the other without greatly affecting our lives here and our hopes for eternity. We are asking whether the Christian religion—not some selection from its tenets which we may feel able to make, but the religion not only which the Apostles preached, but which actually made them able to preach and set them preaching—is true or not true.

I am not, once more, asking at present how the fact of the Resurrection is to be understood. There are some questions which must arise later upon this point; but first we will ask, Is the Resurrection a fact? The nature of the fact is for subsequent consideration. Meanwhile, by the fact of the Resurrection, we mean at any rate this—that the dead body of our Saviour, buried in the grave of Joseph, did not remain dead, that it left that grave an empty grave, that neither there nor elsewhere did it continue to exist as a dead

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD 101

body, that Jesus lived, and lived again in bodily shape and form.

The evidence that this is fact and not fiction is of two main classes which I may call general and special. The general evidence is such as arises from all that we know of the earliest history of our religion, from the death of Christ until the Christian Church emerges as a society conscious of a worldwide mission. The special evidence comprises two main heads—namely, the evidence as to the appearances of the risen Christ, and the evidence as to the empty grave.

The general evidence may shortly be put as follows:—At the time of the Saviour's arrest in the garden, all His disciples, we are told, forsook Him and fled. The Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep of the flock were scattered abroad. Peter lingered near for a time, but presently denied Him. John alone, along with the mother of Jesus and other faithful women, is mentioned as standing by the Cross, but none appear to have divined that this tragic death did not mean the loss of the cause of Jesus, the loss of all. "As

yet they understood not the Scriptures." They had "thought that this had been He which should have redeemed Israel," but their hope was crushed to death by cruel fact.

But within a very short time, at most a few weeks, we are met by an amazing psychological change, not in one or two enthusiasts, but in a whole body of men, some 120 in number. Darkness and despondency have disappeared; radiant confidence has taken their place. The Messiahship of Jesus, conclusively disproved, as it had seemed, by His public and ignominious death, is now triumphantly proclaimed. No rebuke or harsher repressive measures on the part of the authorities avail to intimidate the disciples; no lurking doubt unnerves the serenity with which they assert and suffer for their conviction that Jesus has risen. And not only so. Their opponents, with all the resources of government at their command, are unable to produce the one evidence the production of which would have stopped the disciples' mouths. The actual dead body, had it remained in the grave, could have been seized

by the priests. Had it been removed, a clue to its whereabouts must certainly have existed to be followed up. That no such attempt was made is conclusive proof that no such refutation was possible. The only reply current among the Jews was this, that the disciples had come by night and stolen Him away. That this reply was made—and, although we have it on St. Matthew's authority alone, it is quite unreasonable to doubt the fact that it was made—shows that the emptiness of the grave was incontrovertible, and that nothing was known of any removal of the body by Jews or by Romans. Nor can we for a moment imagine that the reply in question had the smallest foundation in fact. The temper of the Apostolic Church is not that of men inwardly conscious of a lie at the heart of their message. At any rate, that message was sincere. Their disbelief before they actually saw the Lord, and their belief after they had seen Him, are equally sincere, equally unaffected.

We have, then, clear and consistent evidence of a vast and irresistible revolution of

mind and feeling which, in a few days, transformed men crushed, hopeless, and weak, into men strong in buoyant confidence, changed the conquered into conquerors. Something lies behind this change. What is it? Something had come to pass. What was it?

Before attempting to answer this question, I must remind you that, in estimating the significance of this marvellous transformation, the shortness of the time is a question of great importance. That within a year or two unfounded rumour might arise that a dead Messiah had risen again, and that, when it was no longer possible to refute any such rumour, it might gather shape and consistency and become the watchword of a sect of enthusiasts—all that would not, perhaps, have been inconceivable. But we are in face of no such conditions as those. The revolution I speak of was not obscure, gradual, tentative, but peremptory and triumphant. To question this, we must displace from the evidence the statement of St. Paul that the Resurrection was on the third day, a belief which forms

part of every shred of evidence on the subject that has come down to us, and which carries back at least the origin of belief in the Resurrection to within some fifty hours of the Crucifixion. Moreover, those early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, which appear to draw their information from the very core of the original society at Jerusalem, must not be merely corrected in detail, but torn to pieces, if we are to suppose that the time of waiting which preceded the triumphant birth of the Church lasted longer than the first Pentecost after the Crucifixion. The great rebirth of hope and assurance and victorious faith was no matter of slow growth, but rapid, sudden, decisive. It had a cause. What was it?

That cause was the belief, the work of one day, that Jesus had risen from the dead; a belief, sudden and imperious in its genesis, but which came never again to flag or to depart; a belief which carried the little flock of disciples over all difficulties and opposition, which made its way irresistibly in the heart and conscience of the multitude that flocked

to the cause; a belief that conquered their bitterest and ablest adversary, and turned him into its triumphant witness and preacher. "Whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

And now to turn to the specific evidence.

And first in order—that which I mentioned in the second place—the evidence of the empty grave. We have seen already that this is presupposed in what I call the general evidence. Had the grave been intact, the claim that Jesus was risen would have admitted of the easiest refutation. But the grave was actually found empty. As to this fact all our evangelists agree. The women, of whom Mary Magdalene is specially mentioned, came as soon as the Sabbath rest was over on their pious errand with spices and balm. With amazement and fear they find the grave open and the body gone. A mysterious messenger who tells them that the Lord is risen only augments their fear. They depart in silence and tell no one. But Mary sees the Lord Himself, and, fortified perhaps by her support, the women at last tell the

eleven and the rest. Their words seem to them as idle tales, but Peter, accompanied, as the fourth Gospel adds, by St. John, goes to the tomb, and, finding it empty, believes. These are the broad lines of what took place, and the story hangs well together. There are minor discrepancies such as are to be expected at a crisis so rapid in movement, so overwhelming in its surprises. Whether the women saw one angel or two; how soon their terrified silence was broken; what were the exact words of the angel as reported by them; the details of the appearance to Mary Magdalene—these are points of divergence which must be frankly allowed. But do they, I ask, suffice to throw any doubt upon the fact, unanimously attested, of the grave found open and untenanted on the first Easter morning? The empty grave on Easter morning, then, holds the field. It comes to us with distinct, consistent evidence, and there is no evidence whatever to contradict it. Had there been any such evidence, the triumphant testimony of the disciples would have been met by prompt and annihilating refutation,

instead of making its way, as it did, unchallenged and unchecked, as the newborn Church of the risen Lord issued on her way conquering and to conquer.

But the Apostles did not conquer the world by the message of an empty grave. They preached what their eyes had seen and what they had heard with their ears, and what their hands had handled of the Word of Life—Christ raised from the dead. They had seen Him, and bore witness to what they had seen.

But what was their story in its detail? We have it in no complete form, only in fragments, and fragments not easily pieced together. When the synoptic record took written shape, it would seem to have crystallized into two forms—the tradition of Galilee preserved in the first two Gospels, and the tradition of Jerusalem preserved in the third. The fourth Gospel combines the two. According to the Galilean tradition, the Lord had warned His disciples at the Passover that when He was risen, He would precede them to Galilee. The women at the empty grave were bidden to

remind the disciples of the promise, and to bid them go at once to Galilee. "There," it was added, "ye shall see Him." The Lord Himself, moreover, had appeared to them, or to one of them, and repeated the charge. The disciples obeyed, and on repairing to a mountain in Galilee which the Lord had appointed, they were rewarded with the sight of Him, and with the solemn mission which brings the Gospel of St. Matthew to its end. Of any appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, this form of the story knows nothing.

St. Luke, on the other hand, preserves here as elsewhere the tradition of the Jerusalem Church. On the very day of His Resurrection Christ appears first to Simon Peter. This appearance is not described, but referred to in the sequel of the appearance at Emmaus, which also took place on the same day. And still on the same day He appears to the disciples in the upper chamber, eats with them, and bids them wait on in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. According to St. Luke's further narrative in the Acts, they wait forty days; then comes the

Ascension, and presently the fulfilment at Pentecost of the promise of the Father.

It is then quite clear, and a fact to be honestly faced with all possible distinctness of view, that two traditions here stand opposed. It was *either* at Jerusalem, as St. Luke (followed by St. John) tells us, *or* in Galilee, as St. Matthew (following St. Mark) tells us, that the risen Lord *first* appeared to the Apostles. Viewing the two accounts in isolation from other channels of attestation, and taking their testimony on this one point, it seems impossible to reconcile them. Notice that the first two Gospels do not necessarily exclude any appearance at Jerusalem (I speak without reference to the added appendix to St. Mark), nor does St. Luke quite exclude any appearance in Galilee, though to insert it would involve breaking the apparent continuity of the narrative. We might suppose that our Lord first appeared in Galilee according to His promise, and that the appearances at Jerusalem took place after the Apostles had returned thither. But that involves some violence to the Emmaus narrative of St. Luke

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD 111

—not greater, however, than the alternative arrangement would inflict upon the angelic message from the sepulchre in St. Mark and St. Matthew.

In the Synoptic Gospels we have the tradition as it had crystallised itself by a date probably earlier than the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Were we solely dependent upon them for our knowledge we should still, I think, be obliged to conclude that behind these divergences of tradition there lay the antecedent and unanimous belief of the disciples, that the Lord had risen indeed; we should feel that the simplest explanation of that belief was that it had a foundation in fact; and the general evidence of which I have already spoken would maintain its weight. But we should feel that our available information as to the order of events hung too loosely together to furnish a satisfying account of what actually took place.

But, as a matter of fact, we have information independent, so far as we can see, of either of the two alternative traditions we have been considering, a source which reveals

an early circumstantial record already in the field before our Gospels were written, sufficiently definite in its details—not, indeed, to give us a complete clue to the difficulties of the synoptic narratives, but sufficient to suggest that, if we knew all the facts, those difficulties might appear less formidable than they do to our fragmentary knowledge.

I refer to the common apostolic tradition as reproduced by St. Paul, “Whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.” What was this? It was what St. Paul had “received” — “received” from others as he had passed it on to the Corinthians—*i.e.*, by personal witness. He is referring not to the date at which he was writing—perhaps as late as the year 57—but to the time when he had first preached at Corinth in the year 51, that is some twenty years or so after the facts. And not only so; he had “received” it, evidently soon after his conversion, when he had communed with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem as a Christian. Notice then what this very early testimony comprised. That the risen Christ appeared to Kephas;

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD 113

then to the Twelve ; then to over five hundred brethren at once, most of whom were still living when he wrote ; then to James, then to all the Apostles (a wider body apparently than the Twelve) and last of all, to himself at his conversion. St. Paul says nothing as to the scene of these appearances, but as to that to the five hundred, we may be sure that it was in Galilee ; for in Jerusalem the total number of brethren was at first only a hundred and twenty. On the other hand, the appearance to Peter combines so readily with what we read in St. Luke's Gospel of the sequel of the journey to Emmaus, that its mention by St. Paul confirms St. Luke in this particular, and thus supports the supposition that this appearance took place at Jerusalem. St. Paul's testimony still leaves our knowledge fragmentary ; but it supplies a very great fragment of tradition which to some extent corroborates facts in each branch of the synoptic tradition, and suggests a greater whole, of which the parts refuse to fit together only because other parts are still missing. Above all, it confirms us in our conviction that facts, not fancies,

mysterious facts, no doubt, but real true facts, lie at the root of the whole.

That St. Paul leaves out the appearance to Mary Magdalene, who was probably little known by name at Corinth, is a small matter. It is of more importance that he mentions expressly Peter and James, whom he personally knew, and from whom he must have "received" what he had passed on to the Corinthians. That he couples with the other appearances which he enumerates the belated appearance to himself at his own conversion is not surprising, if we realise the strength of his conviction, asserted by him repeatedly in his letters, that this also was no mere mental impression, but a fact most momentously real.

More might be said; but enough has been said to make it clear that we are confronted with a mass of testimony unanimous on the main point—namely, that Jesus had risen and had been actually seen by many persons, testimony which we may accept or reject, but which holds the field without any consistent or probable account of the data to put in its place if it is not accepted.

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD 115

To notice the more crude and unlikely of the alternatives that have been suggested would, I think, be to waste your time to-day. More plausible is a theory of visions. The Saviour did not appear to unbelievers or to the Jews—only to the disciples, His “chosen witnesses.” Nor did He live and converse continuously even with them as He had done before His death. But if we infer from this that the appearances were but the subjective visions of highly-wrought enthusiasm, what of the general evidence referred to above? What of the empty grave? What of the failure of the hostile priesthood to produce the unanswerable reply of the dead unrisen body? There was no such body to produce. The Lord had risen indeed. “Visions” in a sense the appearances were; visions in the sense that they came and went, and that the Lord was seen not as He had been, but in new conditions which did not conform to the laws of ordinary sense. But they were visions of something real, visions seen by bodies of men together, unearthly revealings of what was now an unearthly Body. Not of a spirit, but

of a Body—the same Body that suffered and was buried, yet, in a way we cannot adequately conceive, not the same. There is an animal body, and there is a spiritual body. He died as men die, and as He rose, so shall God raise us in Him.

Here we touch upon the mysterious implications of the doctrine of the Resurrection of our Lord as they are drawn out by St. Paul in the great chapter from which our text is taken. The difficulties merge in the difficult doctrine of the Resurrection of the body—a difficult doctrine, but not, I think, more difficult than the doctrine, which a too superficial theology is ever tending to substitute for it, of the immortality of the soul. Men of ability and discernment have pressed upon us the distinction between the primary, all-important, and valid faith that “Jesus lives”—personally lives—and the “Easter tidings” uncertain of attestation and secondary in importance, of the empty grave and its corollary the bodily resurrection. The two may, perhaps, be distinguished, but is the one, in the last analysis, easier of belief than the

other? Of those who really believe that "Jesus lives"—to whom this belief is a life-sustaining principle, the food of their souls, do not the overwhelming proportion believe that He rose from the grave? To almost all, the surrender of the latter belief would mean the giving up of the other with it. I am anxious to make the fundamental issues clear. When we come to analyse our conception of "soul" is it not a difficulty greater than that presented by any physical miracle to think of soul except in relation to body, and in terms of bodily acts and bodily feelings? The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is saturated with difficulties; but suppose it true, and we are able at once to take up into our ideas of immortality the fact, constant in our experience, that soul is the correlative of body and body of soul.

I assume that when men claim that the fundamental fact is that "Jesus lives," they are meaning that He is as man personally alive—not merely that He is remembered or that His influence lives. In this sense He might be said to live, even by those who

believe in no God, nor in any personal life beyond the grave. In this sense Jesus lives—of course He does. But this is not “Easter Faith,” but plain fact, incontestable by Jew or heathen. Easter Faith asserts much more than this—viz., that He lives and intercedes for us, and pleads with us, and gives us His grace and strength, and that in Him we live also. I say, then, that our Easter faith means that as *man* He does all this; and that what man does is the work, not of soul in its abstraction from body, but of the whole man. If that is what we mean when we say that “Jesus lives,” we proclaim, as a fact not separable from our Easter faith, the Easter tidings of the open grave, and of Christ raised from the dead.

And now one word in conclusion. St. Paul gives us in this chapter a spiritualised doctrine of the Resurrection. He reminds us that the risen Body is not as our mortal bodies are. And consonantly with this we find that our Lord’s life after His rising again is represented in the Gospels as something quite unlike His life “in the days of His flesh.” He was with

the disciples in bodily form, not continuously, but on definite occasions only. But on these occasions He spoke with His disciples, and as He spoke their hearts burned within them. His words are on record. Do not the sayings of the risen Lord convince us that they come from none other than Himself? "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." "Feed My lambs—feed My sheep." "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee?—follow thou Me."—"Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world—go teach all nations." Among all our Lord's words that live and bear living fruit among His followers for all time, such words as these take, naturally and of themselves, a foremost rank. Brethren, these are real words, really spoken if ever Christ spoke on earth, not words transferred from earlier reminiscences, nor invented by wit of man. I do not know how it may be with all of you, but to me the words of the risen Saviour carry conviction of peculiar force and cogency, bear on their face the true stamp and mark of their origin. He spoke always as never

man spake ; and His words in those last forty days struck deep, and never could be forgotten nor dissociated from the time when they were spoken. They abide with the Church in all her earthly pilgrimage, a heritage which will not be taken from her.

SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*—article, "Jesus Christ,"
by Dr. Sanday.

Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*.

Milligan, *Resurrection of our Lord* (Macmillan).

For the Adverse Case.

Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*.

Pfleiderer, *Urchristentum*.

V

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST

V

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

BY THE REV. W. SANDAY, D.D., *Lady Margaret Professor
of Divinity, Oxford.*

“But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.”—St. LUKE ii. 19.

It is a rather nice question whether we are to say “kept all these sayings,” with R.V. text, or “all these things,” with R.V. margin. In the one case it would mean the sayings spoken of by the angels and repeated by the shepherds; in the other case it would mean the whole incident, or group of incidents. And the same question arises when the phrase is repeated a little lower down in ver. 51—after the visit of the Child Jesus to the Temple—“and His mother kept all these sayings (or things) in her heart.” It is a nice

question, and one that I need not, perhaps, stay to discuss. Another small point, as it might be seen, is more important for our purpose: "kept" means "continued to keep"; it is not the momentary wonder of which the Evangelist had just been speaking when he says, "All that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds"; the tense used implies a sustained attitude of mind. And this helps us to understand how the phrase comes to be repeated in connection with an incident that occurred twelve years later. All through that time—indeed, we may be sure, all through her life—the mother pondered deeply over the events described in the first two chapters of the Gospel.

But what I desire more especially to ask you to notice is this: Who is it who is thus able to tell us what was passing in the mother's mind? I think we may say one of two things—either the narrative was derived ultimately from the Virgin herself, or it was just an invention, a picturesque touch, we might say, added by St. Luke.

You will observe that in the first alter-

native I say "ultimately derived" from the Virgin. It need not be quite at first hand; it might be at second or third hand. But the point is that, if the statement has an historical ground at all, if it is not a mere bit of imagination, it cannot have travelled very far from its source. A little personal touch like this is just what the Virgin herself would retain, and what might be retained by the first one or two narrators; but as the story passed from mouth to mouth it would be almost sure to drop out. Only the Virgin herself, or some one specially interested in the Virgin, would think of repeating the innermost thoughts of her heart. Either this—and it is at least the simplest explanation—or else we must suppose that the historian, by an act of what we might call dramatic imagination, has so thrown himself back into the point of view of the Virgin as to reproduce what he conceives would have been the attitude of her mind.

We will treat the two alternatives for the moment as though they were equally probable. At the same time I will just pause to point out

that this kind of dramatic imagination is rather modern than ancient. It is rather a product of the historical and critical spirit than characteristic of the simple, naïve, objective storytelling of the ancients. We shall meet with other examples of the same sort of thing; and I will only ask you to bear the point in mind, as it is one, perhaps, of cumulative probability. For the present, as I have said, I will treat the two alternatives before us as equal.

Something, I think, will turn upon the extent to which this standpoint, the standpoint of the Virgin herself, is kept up throughout the narrative. I will not lay much stress on such minor points as: "And His father and His mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning Him" (ii. 33); "and . . . as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind them in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not; but supposing Him to be in the company (*i.e.*, the caravan returning together from the feast), they went a day's journey; and they sought for Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance" (ii. 43, 44); "and

His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing" (ii. 49); "and they understood not the saying which He spake unto them" (ii. 50). I will not insist much on such points as these, though they are all very consistent; because I think that the imagination might work in this consistent way. But there are other points that seem to me of more importance. Let me, for instance, ask you to notice the remarkable mode of dating events in the following: "And after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months. . . . Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee," &c. (i. 24, 26); "And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned unto her house" (i. 56); this is before the birth of the elder child. We note that this particular manner of dating events would be far more natural to the two mothers than it would to any one else, including the historian.

And here is another point that would be very remarkable in any one else than the

mother: "And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, . . . for behold when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ear the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (i. 41, 43).

If I am not mistaken, such points as these go decidedly and strongly to confirm the first of the two alternatives that we have before us, the hypothesis that the narrative as a whole came, as I said, ultimately from the holy mother herself.

The indications of which I have been speaking are far from standing alone. They are only a few of the salient features that help to give a character to the narrative. Of this Professor W. M. Ramsay, of Aberdeen, has well remarked that "there is a womanly spirit in the whole narrative which seems inconsistent with the transmission from man to man" (*Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* p. 88). I believe that to be most true, and I should like

to stop and illustrate it further. But I must pass on to a second question which the quotation raises. The source from which the narrative was ultimately drawn is one thing, the channel by which it reached St. Luke is another. Professor Ramsay's words imply not only that it came *from* a woman, but that it came *through* women. That also I believe to be most true. But before I come to ask how it did so, there is yet a third question which should be stated—the question, namely, in what relation St. Luke himself stands to it. Is it probable that the narrative came to him orally, and that he was the first to commit it to writing; or did it come into his hands in a written form? I will say a few words about this first.

I had been in the habit of thinking it very possible that St. Luke was the first to set down the contents of these first two chapters in writing. It has, indeed, often been urged that there is a marked contrast in style between the four verses which form the preface to the Gospel and what follows. The first four verses are in quite elegant classical Greek; the main body of the narrative, on the other

hand, is strongly Hebraistic, modelled upon the Greek version of the Old Testament. I was prepared to think that this might be a deliberate change of style on the part of St. Luke, adapting his manner of writing to the subject-matter, and, consciously or unconsciously, allowing himself to be influenced by parallel narratives in the Old Testament. In support of this view was the fact that characteristic expressions of St. Luke's—and his style is perhaps more clearly marked and more easily distinguishable than any other in the New Testament—that characteristic expressions of his are scattered rather freely over the whole two chapters. This does not mean so very much, because he is in the habit of introducing these favourite words and phrases even where he had a written source before him, as, for instance, where he is using St. Mark.

The question whether or not St. Luke was using a written document becomes of special importance in connection with the Canticles, those well-known hymns of praise or prophecy which are so conspicuous a feature in these

two chapters. I never could believe, as some do, that they are simply free compositions on the part of St. Luke. It seemed to me that some of them have too much character of their own to admit of this. At the same time it would make a considerable difference whether St. Luke had a written document before him or not.

To illustrate the kind of question that arises in this connection I may refer to the familiar words of the *Nunc Dimittis*, "To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel." The phrase "a light to lighten the Gentiles" is rather remarkable in the mouth of the aged Simeon. At the time when he spoke the prospect of any extensive preaching to the Gentiles, and still more of the admission of Gentiles on the same footing with Jews, might well seem remote. But for St. Luke writing—let us say in the years 75–80, with the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole missionary work of St. Paul behind him—nothing would be more natural. We might easily suspect that the wording of the prophetic utterance had taken its colour from

the event. It was, however, quite possible that Simeon, foreseeing that event, after the manner of the prophets, dimly, and not in detail, had in his mind that striking passage of Isaiah, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; . . . and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." I am now inclined to think that this interpretation is to be preferred. Simeon had in mind this ancient prophecy; he had studied and thought over it long, and his words mean very much what the prophecy meant—not less, but also not more.

My reason for leaning to this explanation of his language is based upon other phenomena in the chapters we are considering, but more particularly upon the *Benedictus*, in which those phenomena appear to culminate.

When we look at the *Benedictus* at all closely, how intensely Jewish it is! And not only is it Jewish, but Jewish of the period to which it is ascribed. It is, of course, Messianic; but the Messianic idea expressed in it is not the new specifically Christian conception, as it was

recast and purified by our Lord ; it has much more in common with the old popular expectation in its current form.

I must not stay to quote at length the well-known words ; but I would ask you just to go over in your minds the first five or six verses, and observe their essentially pre-Christian character.

There is quite a piling up of expressions that are characteristic of the older view :—"The God of Israel" ; "wrought redemption for His people"—it is the technical term for the *chosen* people, as distinct from all others ; "in the house of His servant David" ; "salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us"—it is the political deliverance that Israel hoped for from powers like Syria or Rome ; "to show mercy towards our fathers"—the patriarchs and kings and people of Old Testament times ; "and to remember His holy covenant," for which another name is "the oath which He sware unto Abraham our father" ; and, again, the promise of deliverance, "out of the hand of our enemies," *i.e.*, the political enemies mentioned just before.

This is all the old idea of the Messianic reign, not His who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." We may apply it to this spiritual kingdom and to deliverance from our spiritual enemies, but that is not the original meaning. And just because it is not the original meaning the words are all the more appropriate to the speaker Zacharias. They are appropriate to Zacharias, but not in the least appropriate to St. Luke. The whole canticle is far removed from the spirit of St. Luke, and I think we may say *cannot* be his composition. We may credit him with some dramatic imagination, but it does not seem possible that it can have gone so far as that.

I conclude, then, that by far the most probable hypothesis is that in these chapters St. Luke was using an older writing; a writing curiously uninfluenced by later developments, and curiously suited to the situation which it describes. It still breathes the old narrow Jewish Particularism, as it existed at the beginning of our era. It is prophetic of Christianity, but not yet in the strict sense Christian.

Just one other point—that strangely minute appeal to the Mosaic law in connection with the ritual of the Presentation in the Temple: “And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were fulfilled, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons” (ii. 22–24). That, again, is very unlike St. Luke, the disciple of St. Paul, the great opponent of everything legal, and very unlike the date, 75–80 A.D., when the Christian Church had long given up these Jewish usages. By that time the interest in such things would be gone.

I should much like to pursue this subject, and to discuss at length the historical value of these two chapters. I should like to point out the light which they throw on the surroundings of the Holy Family; in other words, on the character of the circle in the midst of which our Lord was born, and by which His

coming was first greeted. It is a circle with distinct marks of its own, and with a history that carries us far back into Old Testament times, and perhaps also to some extent points forward beyond the New Testament. The most significant name for this circle is "the poor" or "the meek," as we have them described for us in the Psalms. There is much that is deeply interesting on this line of inquiry; but its bearing on our present subject is indirect rather than direct. I refer to it on this occasion chiefly in order to show that St. Luke was probably making use of a document, and that a document which, from a Christian point of view, might be called "archaic" in its character.

The next question, then, that we have to ask is where such a document as this is likely to have come from. We have seen that it has two distinguishing marks besides its archaism—(1) There is about it a certain womanliness of tone; and (2) it appears to stand in some special relation to the Virgin Mary. Is there anywhere among the special channels of information which St. Luke appears to have

possessed one that seems naturally to satisfy these conditions ?

There are a number of indications not confined to the Gospel, but present also in the Acts, and, indeed, not collected in any one place, but dispersed throughout the two treatises, which seem to show—and I think we may say certainly show—that St. Luke had a special source of information connected with the court of the Herods. It is a source that covers a wide range of time, going back to the reign of Herod the Great and the childhood of one of his sons ; but it is concerned mainly with Herod Antipas and Herod Agrippa I. It was from this source that St. Luke obtained such minute and recondite facts as that on the day of our Lord's trial Herod and Pilate “were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke xxiii. 12) ; and again that Herod Agrippa I. “was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon ; and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend, they asked for peace because their country was fed from the king's country” (Acts xii. 20).

Now, a peculiar feature about this source is its very personal character. There are three persons mentioned in it, otherwise, I believe, entirely unknown to history—names that do not occur in Josephus or in any other historian of the time—and all three intimately connected with the Herodian court. The first is Blastus, the king's chamberlain, who has just been referred to. The second occurs in the next chapter of the Acts (Acts xiii. 1), "Manaen (or Menahem), the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch," who was among the prophets and teachers at Antioch. And, lastly, there is "Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward," who is mentioned twice in the Gospel.

It is to this Joanna, the wife of Chuza, that I desire especially to invite your attention. She appears upon the stage four times, twice by name and twice unnamed. We hear of her, first, as one of the women who accompanied our Lord in Galilee and ministered unto Him (or, rather, unto them—*i.e.*, the whole party—that is the right reading) with their substance (Luke viii. 3). We are next told ex-

pressly that she was one of the group of women who went to the tomb on the morning of the Resurrection (xxiv. 10), and who had also been witnesses of the Crucifixion (xxiii. 49). And we may safely infer that she was one of the women collected together with the Apostles in the Upper Room after the Ascension (Acts i. 14). On these last two occasions we also know that the mother of Jesus was in the company; and we cannot doubt at all that at this period the two women were much thrown together.

Does not this give us exactly the link of connection that we are in search of? Is it not in a high degree probable that some time during this intimacy, in a moment of quiet confidence, the Mother of the Lord imparted to her companion the things which she had kept in her mind and pondered so long—not only the smaller incidents which attended the wondrous event, but that event itself, the great secret of all?

I must not profess to know too much. It may not have been to Joanna herself that these things were told. I do not say that it

was Joanna herself who set them down in writing. It is, perhaps, not quite necessary that they should have been set down in writing at all. Of course, several of the details relating to the Herodian court might just as well—and if they had stood alone we might have thought more probably—have been imparted to St. Luke directly by word of mouth. But we have seen reason to think that the material contained in his first two chapters came to St. Luke in writing. They bear the marks of a state of things so much earlier than, and so very different from, any of which he had experience; and these marks are so fugitive in their nature that one is inclined to think that only a written document would have preserved them. On these grounds it appears that the hypothesis that St. Luke had before him such a document is preferable. I do not say how it came to him, or when it came—whether during his two years' residence at Cæsarea, when he appears to have been with St. Paul (Acts xxiv. 27), or at some other time. All these details must be matter of speculation, and I cannot lay stress upon them.

I only hold fast to the central fact, which seems to be satisfactorily proved, that in some such way as this particulars known only to the Virgin Mother herself might easily and naturally, and without any forcing of the evidence, have come into the hands of St. Luke, and come into them through a woman.

It is well that I should be quite candid about the course of reasoning which I have been putting before you. That part of it which relates to Joanna, the wife of Chuza, struck me about thirty years ago, and has been expressed in public and in print, but has never to my knowledge been directly criticised. That part of the argument which points to the narrative as coming through a woman and ultimately from the Virgin Mother herself is in full agreement with Professor Ramsay in the book to which I have referred, *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* The rest, and in particular so much as goes to show that St. Luke was using a document, and a document of a very early character, only occurred to me quite recently, and has not yet undergone the

ordeal of criticism. Still I have considerable confidence that the argument is sound. At least the facts on which it rests are for the most part hard facts, and not mere impressions; and there are more which I have not mentioned. At any rate, I hope that the process of reasoning is strictly critical, and more deserving of that name than the rough-and-ready—I might say rough-and-rude—rejection of the whole narrative simply because it contains marvels.

The right method, surely, is first to ascertain on what kind of attestation a statement rests, and so to infer the extent to which it may be trusted; not, because the *data* differ somewhat from those that come within our experience, without more ado to dismiss the whole, and refuse even to consider the nature of the evidence.

I quite allow that there are parts of the narrative that are more consonant with the ideas and expectations of the time than they are with our own. And to translate them into our own way of thinking is difficult, and perhaps in part impossible. We must always

remember that they were meant for the men of the time, and far more remotely for us. But where the evidence is so good as in this instance I believe it is, we must needs think that something real and solid lies behind it; something as to which, if we cannot give it a better name, we must even be content with the description that we find. We may be very sure that there are more things in heaven and earth than our philosophy can measure and label.

I would earnestly ask for patience. These questions are not simple, but highly complex; and they are not to be disposed of by the summary processes of common sense. It is always easy to cut a knot that ought to be untied; but when we have done so we must not call it "science." Rather in a sensitive mind there will remain behind a sense of violence and unreason.

What seems to me greatly to commend the view that I have been expressing is that if we assume it to be true all the rest of the phenomena fall into their place, as they do not on any other assumption. It has, for

instance, often been pointed out that the Gospels, including St. John, frequently speak of the parents of our Lord in the plural number, and of Joseph as His father. Even these two chapters of St. Luke, notwithstanding the fact that they record the whole story of the Annunciation, three times over use the phrase "His parents" (ii. 27, 41, 43), and once with yet greater precision "His father and His mother" (ii. 33); even the Virgin Mary herself is represented as saying, when she finds her Son in the Temple, "Behold, Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing" (ii. 48).

This was, no doubt, the common way of speaking throughout our Lord's public ministry. The people of Nazareth and Capernaum looked upon Joseph, who by that time was probably no longer living, as His human father. And He did not go out of His way to correct them. It is highly probable that at this time the Apostles themselves knew no better. They just shared the common mode of speech with their neighbours; and they continued to share it for some years after the

Resurrection. Meanwhile, the Virgin also kept her secret to herself. We might apply to her a saying in one of the Apocryphal Gospels, *μυστήριον ἐμὸν ἐμοί* ("My mystery, my secret, is my own, and not another's"). It was not until after the Ascension—and we know not how much after—that in some quiet hour of sympathetic confidence she breathed into the ear of one of those mothers in Israel who had so long been near her person the strange and awe-inspiring story of the wondrous Birth. So, at last, this delicate thread, so nearly lost, became twisted into the strand of the gospel message. And, once there, the Church has been very careful not to let it go.

Such appear to be the facts. And if any one who still does not see his way to accept the story as it is told falls back in self-defence upon that providential ordering by which this particular article of the Creed was, as it were, held in reserve, and not included in the public teaching either of our Lord Himself or (for some time, we may believe) of the Apostles, I for one would acknowledge his right to do so. There is this difference between the Virgin

Birth and (for example) the Resurrection, that, whereas the latter was fully divulged and believed in by the Church, and by every part of the Church, almost from the first moment of its occurrence, the former entered into the common faith slowly and by degrees, and by a channel that was apparently private rather than public—entered into it, we might say, by a side door (though, as we believe, by the express appointment of the Master of the house) rather than by the broad, public entrance. If any one desires to claim the benefit of this difference, I think we ought to let him. Only, on the other side, where this is done, we ought, I think, in strictness to set against the partial silence of the Apostolic age the very marked emphasis of the age that immediately succeeded that of the Apostles.

I wish I had time to set before you in full the teaching on this subject of Ignatius of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom about the year 110. In his letters, the genuineness of which is now hardly disputed, we can see that the Virgin Birth was for him an article of faith of the first importance, and one that he

earnestly impresses upon his readers. Not much later—if later at all—the clause which affirms it took its place in the oldest form of the Christian Creed. The two scholars who have made the closest and most elaborate study of the history of the Creed, one of the two a distinct Liberal, place this oldest form—the first draft, so to speak, of the Apostles' Creed—about the year 100, and Professor Harnack only a few years later, about 140. Already, I think we may say, in the first quarter—or at the very latest in the first half—of the second century, the Virgin Birth had a place in the Christian Creed that it has never since lost.

I have thought it best to give you as connected a view as I could of the probable course of things entirely on the basis of the Gospel of St. Luke, and without bringing in the corresponding chapters of St. Matthew. Those chapters are involved in so many questions, historical and critical, that I do not feel that I can use them with the same amount of freedom. I need not remind some who

may hear me that there has been no lack of hypotheses to show how some of the leading features in these chapters—the Visit of the Wise Men, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Flight into Egypt, even the Virgin Birth itself—may have grown up either out of hints contained in the Old Testament or through parallels in the profane history of the time. Two hypotheses of this latter kind have been made quite recently. I do not doubt that much of all this is untenable; but I am not prepared to say that there may not be in it a residuum of truth. In any case these two chapters appear to belong to that portion of the First Gospel that is latest and least certain.

I ought, perhaps, also just to allude to the fact that there are problems connected with these chapters of the Lower Criticism as well as of the Higher—problems, I mean, as to the text of what was originally written. These would be too technical to discuss here and now. I may have the opportunity of going into them more fully elsewhere; and I have already written about them at some length in the article, “Jesus Christ,” in Hastings’

Dictionary of the Bible. I only mention this in order that you may not think that anything of importance is being neglected, though I do not in the least believe that any of the textual points that have been raised make any difference at all to the main issue. I have no doubt that they leave it precisely where it stood without them.

There are only two remarks that I should like to make as to the positive evidence supplied by these two chapters. 1. It has often been observed that just as the first two chapters of St. Luke appear to be written from the point of view of the mother of the Lord, so these first two chapters of St. Matthew were written from the point of view of His reputed father. Just as in the one account we are told things that could be known only to the Virgin Mary, so also in the other we are told things that could be known only to Joseph—for instance, that he was minded to put away his wife, though quietly and without attracting attention; then that he was warned in a dream not to carry out his intention, because that which was con-

ceived in her was of the Holy Ghost (Matt. i. 20); then we are told that he was again warned in the same way after the visit of the Wise Men, and that "he took the young Child and His mother" and departed into Egypt. Yet a third and fourth warning, also conveyed by dreams, determine the return to Palestine and the settlement at Nazareth.

It is the consistency with which this standpoint is maintained that is rather striking. It would be natural to infer that this narrative came in some way ultimately from Joseph as the other from Mary. At the same time I do not feel that I can lay as much stress on the point, because I cannot trace the channel through which the information is likely to have come any further.

2. The second point is that the whole tradition, as we find it in St. Matthew, is so utterly divergent from that in St. Luke, that the few but rather significant points in which they agree acquire an enhanced importance. These are, of course, the central point of all, the special operation of the Holy Ghost—in

both cases described in that way, which is the more remarkable when we think that before we come to the New Testament the very term itself, Holy Ghost, was not common, and when we think also that the same event might have been described quite differently; for instance, St. John speaks rather of an incarnation of the Divine Word. And then round this central point there are a number of minor ones; for instance, that Mary was at the time betrothed to Joseph, that her Child was to be called "Jesus," that the birth took place at Bethlehem of Judæa (not Bethlehem in Galilee), but that the Holy Family went to live at Nazareth. These coincidences between the two narratives are thrown into relief and, I think we may say, specially corroborated because of their general unlikeness to each other.

I have spoken so far of the historical side of the Virgin Birth, of the kind of evidence on which it rests as an historical fact. But you will expect me before I close to say something about its theological side, its significance in

relation to the eternal counsels of God and His providential ordering of the world.

From this point of view the key is supplied by the special "Preface" in our Prayer Books for Christmas Day. In it we laud and magnify God's glorious Name because He gave Jesus Christ, His only Son, to be born as at that time for us: "Who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very Man of the substance of the Virgin Mary, His mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin." In that two conditions are laid down. On the one hand He was to be "very man of the substance of" His mother; and, on the other hand, He was to be "without spot of sin to make us clean" from sin. In the conjunction of those two things lies the paradox. That He should become man and yet not sinful like man—that is the wonder that moves our adoration. And it is a wonder which we are led to associate with the manner in which He was born.

I will say a word on the second point first—the sinlessness. I may be asked—one sees the question often asked—How could the

Virgin Birth be a guarantee of sinlessness? After all, the human element in the birth is only halved, it is not removed. It is urged that the taint of sin, which attaches to all that is born of woman, might be conveyed—and, indeed, *must* be conveyed—through the mother alone.

That would hold good if the other factor in the process were purely negative—if it meant only the absence of something human and not the presence of something Divine. No doubt when we speak of that presence we are speaking of a mystery; we are speaking of something beyond us, and to which our empirical tests cannot be applied. The last thing that I would wish to do would be to intrude upon that mystery, or to seek to dogmatise about it. It is far better left as a mystery. Still, I think there is one thing that we should be justified in saying about it. If there was a Divine agency at work, however mysterious, we may be sure that it would at least refine all it touched. “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge

•

them as gold and silver . . . for He is like a refiner's fire" (Mal. iii. 3, 2). "I will turn My hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin" (Isa. i. 25). That is the way in which the operation of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, is described. Can we think of evil as living in contact with it—in contact of which we are meant to think as the closest and most organic that the mind can conceive? I repeat that I do not try to penetrate the mystery; but of so much at least I think we may be sure.

It might, however, be urged by those who speculate more freely about these things, Why is it that the human element in the Birth was only halved? Why was it not altogether removed? Why was there any necessity for a human mother if there was not for a human father?

That was just a question that speculative minds put to themselves in ancient times, as they might do now. And they took the step that the New Testament has not taken. Those who did so most consistently were the

sects called Gnostics. Marcion, for instance, did away with the human birth altogether. The fact corresponding to it with him was that a heavenly Being suddenly descended and became visible in human form at Capernaum in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar.

Another important school, the Valentinians, held that the Holy Child passed through His mother, as they expressed it, "like water through a tube."

The Gnostics, however, were not strictly Christians. With them philosophy or theosophy came first, and they sought to give it a Christian colour by adapting to it the text of the New Testament by means of allegory.

We run no great danger of that kind now. There is little fear of our losing sight of the full humanity of our Lord. It is rather His full Divinity that we are in danger of losing sight of; and it is this that the Christian Church has sought to safeguard by its insistence upon the Virgin Birth.

I am always very reluctant to use the word "must" in connection with any dispensation

of God—to say that it “must” have taken place in one particular way and in no other. God sees not as man sees, and His resources are infinite—beyond our power even to imagine. But when we are told, on what seems to be such good authority, that His way of bringing His first-begotten into the world was through birth from a virgin, we can at least assent to its fitness for the end in view. If we try to throw ourselves back into the spirit of the time and ask what other method would be so intelligible to men of all classes and degrees of culture, we must answer, None. And when I say “so intelligible,” I mean what other method would so invest the act of Incarnation with the associations of perfect sinlessness and purity? I do not think that we are able to conceive of any other method that should do this. That He should be “born without spot of sin to make us clean from all sin” is a truth to which our hearts instinctively respond.

Nor can we forget, although this, no doubt, stands on another level, of what incalculable value this same truth has been in raising the

whole idea of womanhood, and especially of motherhood. In times of rudeness and ignorance and violence this ideal has shone like a star in the heavens. And if, like so many of the best gifts to men, it has had its abuses, the abuses are such as we can avoid, and keep the good without the harm.

“We beseech Thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts that, as we have known the incarnation of Thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by His cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of His resurrection; and as He was presented in the Temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto Thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

LITERATURE

I do not know anything in English that quite covers the ground of this sermon, but I would warmly recommend a paper read at Sion College by Dr. Chase, President of Queen's College and Norrisian Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, on “The Supernatural Element in our Lord's Earthly Life in Relation to Historical Methods of Study” (Macmillan, 1903); a paper on a similar

subject ("Miracles and the Supernatural Character of the Gospels") read at the Northampton Church Congress by Dr. Swete, Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge; three papers by the Dean of Westminster, on "The Incarnation" in the *Commonwealth* for the first three months of this year; and the following books: Professor W. M. Ramsay, of Aberdeen, *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1898); Bishop Gore, *Dissertations on Subjects connected with the Incarnation* (Murray, 1895); and some references in Illingworth, *Divine Immanence* (Macmillan, 1898). Of the older books, Dr. W. H. Mill, *On the Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1861), is still of some value. With this exception none of the works mentioned would be really unsuited to the general reader. Some parts of Bishop Gore's *Dissertations* might perhaps come under that description, but not the portion relating to the Virgin Birth.

VI

THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL.—I

VI

THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL.—I

BY THE REV. ARTHUR C. HEADLAM, M.A., *Principal-Elect*
of King's College.

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received.”—1 COR. iv. 3.

ON previous Sundays you have had discussed in very able sermons critical questions of great importance, round which the very keenest controversy is raging. I am going to attempt to-day to direct your attention to what is largely outside controversy. When a scholar is engaged upon the investigation of a difficult and uncertain subject, he will, if he is wise, seek some secure foundation from which he may start, and, having that secure, make his way carefully and cautiously among what is less secure. He may very likely find

that he has safer ground to go on than he had thought, but at any rate his start will be sure. Now if any of you are bewildered, as well you may be, by the contending voices of scholars, if on some of the more doubtful points which are being discussed it seems to you that you cannot at present decide, I ask you to turn to what is quite clear and certain, and to try and estimate its significance. It is no new advice that I am giving, it is advice which has often been given before; it was given to myself when I was just beginning my studies. But it is advice which needs, I think, forcing home in every new crisis. So much attention is attracted by what is subject of controversy that a very large amount of solid fact is lost sight of. If I were speaking about the Old Testament I should dwell on the great prophets of the eighth century before Christ; in speaking of the New Testament I shall ask you to consider the Epistles, or rather the chief Epistles, of St. Paul.

I.

In the first place we must recognise that the genuineness of a number of them, of quite a sufficient number for our purpose, is so little controverted that we may consider it undoubted. It is true indeed that there is a small body of scholars, mostly Dutch, who dissent, but they have neither furnished arguments of any weight, nor have they gained any adherents among competent judges. They may be dismissed as any classical scholar would dismiss a critic who doubted the genuineness of the *Annals* of Tacitus or of the *Æneid* of Virgil. Of the thirteen Epistles, four—Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians—have never seriously been doubted; to these the best modern critics of all schools would add 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Nor is there much doubt about Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. A good deal of hesitation is still felt about the Epistle to the Ephesians, although that is diminishing. On the other hand, the Pastoral Epistles are still a problem. There are many who do not

accept them; even those of us who believe that they were written by St. Paul would be the first to admit that there are difficulties in treating them as genuine. These, then, we must for the present almost entirely put aside, and, as a matter of fact, I shall dwell mainly on the four great Epistles. They contain quite enough for our purpose.

II.

But some of you may demand a little more. You may ask, Why, after all, are we to accept these Epistles? They were written, you say, more than 1,800 years ago. How can we have any certainty about such a remote and distant past? Into the general questions of historic certainty I cannot go now; I can only say that the progress of discovery during the last hundred years has given us the most minute and accurate account of just the most important century in the history of the world, the first century of our era. Of a great deal that happened then we have a perfect right to use the word *certain*. With regard to our particular

subject I will give you quite shortly three arguments.

1. For the collection of the Pauline Epistles we have very good external testimony. From the close of the first century the witness of Christian literature, although slight, is continuous, and in all of it we find undoubted quotations from the leading Pauline Epistles. Polycarp, who wrote his epistles not much later than the year 110, almost certainly had a collection of St. Paul's Epistles identical with our own.

2. The other two arguments you can work out quite well for yourselves with the use of the Revised Version, as they depend upon internal evidence. You can put together the history which is implied in the Epistles and see how it fits into the Acts of the Apostles. They are quite clearly independent documents, and they do not always agree, but the one represents the circumstances in which, and in which alone, the others could have been written. You can examine these circumstances, and it will, I believe, become more and more clear to you that the Epistles of

St. Paul could only have been produced in just that period in which all sane criticism has placed them. There is a fundamental postulate which lies behind all right and sane criticism, that a book has a clear and definite relation to the time at which it was produced. It is this principle which makes us place the later chapters of Isaiah at the close of the Exile; a similar principle will make us feel that it is impossible that the greater number of the Pauline Epistles could have been written at any time except that of the early foundation of the Gentile Churches. It is with the problems of that time that they deal. At what period could it have been worth while to forge the dispute between Paul and Cephas recorded in the Epistle to the Galatians, or when could all those questions mentioned in the Corinthians have arisen except in a Gentile Church recently founded? or why should any one write the Epistle to the Ephesians after the theory of the Church expressed in it had become a decisive fact by the fall of Jerusalem? or see how only forty years later when Clement of

Rome wrote the teaching concerning Justification in the Epistle to the Romans had become out of touch with the times? It was only just at one period in history that these letters could have been written, and that soon passed away.

3. But thirdly, there is something deeper, more personal, the revelation of the character and inmost thoughts of the writer. Read the second Epistle to the Corinthians, that most difficult and enigmatical of any of the Epistles, and consider whether passage after passage of it does not come straight from the heart of a man whose whole being is bound up in what he is writing. "Yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I write unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men." "We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed,

yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." Read the whole Epistle with its intense personal revelations, and think if it is possible to doubt the genuineness. I will take only one more instance, from the Second Epistle to Timothy: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing." Are these words the rhetorical exercise of a forger?

I have sketched for your notice lines for your own future reading, which is all that is possible for me in the time at my disposal. It would, I believe, give interest and life to your Bible reading if you attempted to work out these headings for yourselves. I propose now to ask to what it is that the leading

Epistles of St. Paul bear witness, all written, you must remember, before the year 60—within thirty years of the Crucifixion—while many of the followers of our Lord were still living.

III.

In the first place the Christianity which St. Paul taught was the Christianity which we believe and teach, and which all good Christians always have believed and taught. Some of you have been taught to call it the Catholic faith, some of the Gospel. They are two different names for the same thing. St. Paul tells us that—"God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." St. Paul tells us that there is one Spirit, and there is one Lord, and one God, and that the spiritual gifts to man are the manifestations indifferently of the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God. He tells us that "we

are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness," that "we rejoice through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." In other words, he tells us of God the Father, of His Son Jesus Christ, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven;" he tells us of the Spirit poured into our hearts; he tells us, too, of the Church which is the Body of Christ, and our unity and communion in it; he tells us of our Christian life, of righteousness, and of truth, and of judgment to come.

I need not spend more time on what you all know, but now I should like to draw your attention to something further. This new teaching has created and appropriated to itself a whole religious phraseology. Examine from this point of view the first seven verses of the Epistle to the Romans. They are only a salutation; St. Paul has no direct purpose of teaching anything, he is merely referring to what is admitted and presupposed, and for

all this there is obviously a recognised and developed phraseology. Paul is the "servant of Jesus Christ, "called to be an apostle," "separated unto the gospel of God." He speaks of the Son, born of the seed of David according to the flesh, "declared to be the Son of God with power." He addresses those who are called to be saints, and he salutes them with grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now all this seems so familiar that we look upon it as quite natural. Let us consider what a tremendous difference there is between this and anything that had appeared before, and that it had all grown up within a generation from the death of Christ.

And once more, not only has the Christian teaching learnt to express itself in a special phraseology, it has become the natural expression of the deepest religious feeling. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle has no dogmatic purpose from beginning to end, but the Epistle abounds in dogmatic expressions translated into the forms of devotion: "The sufferings of Christ

abound unto us;" "God which leadeth us in triumph in Christ;" "We are a sweet savour of Christ unto God;" "We all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit;" "Christ who is the image of God;" "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature." "We are a temple of the living God." "In the sight of God speak we in Christ." What a developed theology is implied in this expression "in Christ!" St. Paul is no longer acting by himself; in all his hopes, his joys, his pain, his sufferings, he is "in Christ."

Now we know quite well what was the Jewish thought when our Lord came; you may read the Book of Enoch, or the Psalms of Solomon, or Philo; and we know what was the heathen thought; you may read it at its highest in Seneca; but what a world of difference in language and thought there is between them! What had created the difference? The Christian would answer—the life and death of Christ.

IV.

But now you may suggest that this elaborate system of life and thought, this consciousness of Divine things which penetrates the whole life and being of the Apostle, was something which he had created for himself. It is, as has been said, Paulinism and not Christianity. Now, of course, it is true that St. Paul did much for the development of Christianity, that he believed, as we believe, that he was directly inspired by the Spirit, and that he tells us that the gospel which he preached was not after man. "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." This clearly indeed implies that the conviction of the truth, and meaning, and universal mission of Christianity came to him, not because any one had preached to him the gospel, not because he had been converted through any human agency, but because God had spoken directly to his heart, but it does not in the least imply that he held himself indebted to a special revelation for a know-

ledge of the facts of Christ's life, or the teaching of Christ, or the normal form of the Christian faith. He makes it quite clear that there is a distinction between what he received as part of Christ's teaching and what he teaches through God's Spirit.

Let us begin with a simple instance which makes this plain (1 Cor. vii. 10): "But unto the married I give charge; yea! not I, but the Lord;" and immediately there follow directions clearly based on our Lord's words in Matt. v. 32. But elsewhere in the same chapter, where there is no gospel command, he speaks on his own authority. Ver. 12—"But to the rest, say I, not the Lord." Ver. 25—"Now, concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Ver. 40—"But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God." Now these passages make it quite clear that St. Paul drew a marked distinction between teaching which he based on the traditions which he had received of our

Lord's words and teaching that he received by the Spirit, and this is corroborated by two striking instances. For the most part, let us remember that St. Paul's Epistles assume the ordinary knowledge of the Christian faith. He was writing to those who had received his early preaching, who had been taught the normal facts of our Lord's life, who had been baptized, and had the general Church life created for them. Many little incidental allusions tell us this, and remind us that we may perfectly and legitimately discern the simpler Christianity behind the more elaborate arguments, but two particular passages bring it out more clearly.

One, the significance of which was brought out in the last lecture to which you listened, gives us St. Paul's teaching of the Resurrection of the Dead. Often in his Epistles he had alluded to this part of what he had preached in the Churches he had visited. So 1 Thess. i. 9, 10: "For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye

turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." But circumstances in Corinth compel St. Paul to treat fully a subject which normally he passed over with an incidental reference, because it was well known. In his treatment of it I would ask you to notice three things.

Notice (1) first that he represents himself quite clearly as handing on something which he has received: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried; and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." The main facts of Christ's life as a basis of dogmatic belief are to St. Paul as much as to us part of a tradition, which it is the duty of the Christian teacher to hand on faithfully to others as he received it. There was in all essentials a Christian Creed then just as there is now.

Then (2), secondly, this was something St. Paul shared with all Christian teachers, both

those with whom he agreed and those from whom he differed. "Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed." Twenty years after the death of Christ the belief in His resurrection and His death for mankind was a recognised part of the normal Christian teaching. The early chapters of the Acts suggest that it was so from the very beginning, and, at any rate, twenty years is a very short time for such a stupendous change in human thought to have grown up, and transformed the life and language of the Christian Church. Perhaps we may find that the simplest explanation of the universal teaching is that the events revealed were really true.

And then (3), thirdly, it is quite clear that St. Paul was conscious of the value of evidence, and had taken the trouble to examine it carefully. "Of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep." What do these words imply? Surely that St. Paul would remind his readers that there was good evidence of living men to which he could refer them; that he had taken the trouble to collect

the testimony of eye-witnesses, and that it was open to them to do the same.

All these facts taken together make us, I think, feel that the evidence of St. Paul takes us back far behind his own writings, that he was expounding a faith which was always the "faith of the Church," and that a Christian creed potentially, if not actually, already existed.

The second instance is of great importance. If we had not had the First Epistle to the Corinthians preserved, we might almost assume that St. Paul knew nothing of the Lord's Supper. I say almost, because there are a certain number of casual allusions which might naturally be interpreted to have reference to it. Substantially, however, he does not mention it. The reason was, of course, that it was something ordinary and normal, and therefore would not be touched on unless particular circumstances gave him a reason for mentioning it. Such particular circumstances had, however, happened at Corinth. Twice in the Epistle the Communion is clearly referred to. In the one place the allusion is

incidental, in the other we have explicit teaching; the one shows us how much it was part of the normal life, the other tells us of its origin. Again we have a similar formula to what we have had before: "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." To celebrate the Lord's Supper, to give an account of its original meaning, was clearly part of St. Paul's practice in the Churches which he founded, and part of the tradition which he had himself inherited, and the normal system of the Church.

V.

It is now time to sum up our argument. We have taken in the Epistles of St. Paul certain documents which were undoubtedly written within thirty years of the death of Christ, and have sketched the argument on which their genuineness is based; we have examined them and found that they contain in all its essentials the Christian creed, not as something new, but as a recognised system, which had already built up a technical phraselogy

and translated itself into the language of devotion. We have found that in certain fundamental points this creed was shared by St. Paul's contemporaries, that it was something that had been handed down to him by others, and had been derived, as he believed, from the Lord. Now all these facts are perfectly explicable if we accept the view of the early Church contained in the Acts, and the record of our Lord's life contained in the first three Gospels. But they are not explicable otherwise. It is quite impossible that St. Paul should have created the religion that he taught. It is to me quite inconceivable that in any essential points it was created by the Apostles in the early days of the Church. No doubt they helped to formulate it by reflection on the life and death and resurrection of their Master in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures, but to me it is a fundamental fact that the existence of St. Paul and his writings cannot be explained except by assuming the life and teaching, the death and resurrection of Him who was his master, and is ours—our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

VII

THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL.—II

THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL.—II.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR C. HEADLAM, M.A., *Rector of Welwyn,
Herts.*

“It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother’s womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me.”—GAL. i. 15.

ST. PAUL in this verse puts before us the twofold aspect of the event which we are accustomed to call his Conversion. It was a definite call from God, and its purpose was that he should be the principal agent in the announcement to the Gentiles of the revelation of Jesus Christ. I propose to-day, first of all, to continue what I said last week about the Revelation of Jesus Christ and the witness of St. Paul to the contents of that revelation, and then to speak of the evidential value in all its aspects of the Conversion and spiritual testimony of the Apostle.

I.

There must be in all religions a distinction drawn between the exposition of truth in its popular form and the more elaborate and deeper aspect which it presents to the trained theologian. This is not a distinction between an exoteric and an esoteric teaching, it is not a distinction between what is partially true and what is really true, but between simple rudimentary instruction and a more elaborate, a more philosophical, and a more technical expression. No one supposes that there is any fundamental distinction between the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, but the latter is fuller and ampler than the former, and expresses the same truths in the carefully drawn-out language which controversy had made needful. There is the same distinction in the Bible between the Gospel of St. Mark and the Gospel of St. John, between the Epistles to the Thessalonians and those to the Colossians and Ephesians, and St. Paul himself recognises the distinction. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto

spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat." The fuller and ampler expression arises partly from controversial necessity, partly from the higher aims of spiritual aspiration. There is a danger in both if unguarded, a danger of excessive technical language—developed in controversial interests—alienating simpler minds from religion; and a danger to the human mind, if it lets go reality in attempting to express the spiritual aspirations which transcend experience. There will, therefore, be a double gain, a practical as well as an evidential, gain in studying the more developed Pauline theology.

II.

St. Paul's doctrine concerning the person of Christ is contained in its more developed form in the Epistle to the Colossians. There he tells us that Christ is "the image of the invisible God, born before all creation," that "in Him all things were created . . . all things were created through Him and

unto Him," that "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." "He is the head of the body, the Church; the beginning, the first born from the dead." "It was the good pleasure that in Him should all the fulness—*i.e.*, the completeness of the Divine attributes—dwell," and through Him to reconcile all things unto Him, having made peace through the blood of the Cross." These great ideas, quite adequately expressed for our purpose in the introduction to the Epistle, are applied throughout it in their religious and practical aspect, as giving a motive and a principle for the spiritual life.

Now what is the place that they occupy in St. Paul's whole system? They are clearly a development, but in what sense a development?

(1) In the first place they arose from the necessities of controversy. St. Paul had in the Epistle to the Colossians to combat a form of erroneous teaching which exalted the angels to the same level as Christ. In the face of that teaching he has to bring out the unique position of Christ, Himself

begotten before all worlds and Creator of all things visible and invisible, of spiritual beings as well as of the human race. That St. Paul does somewhat more than this, that he not only meets the particular case, but develops the spiritual significance of the person of Christ in a way to touch our whole moral and intellectual being, will not surprise any one who has mastered St. Paul's method. He always goes far beyond what occasion requires, and in each point that he discusses opens out vast depths of spiritual knowledge which seem to penetrate his inmost being.

Then (2), secondly, we get traces of this language in earlier Epistles. In 2 Corinthians we are told that "Christ is the image of God," that He "knew no sin." In 1 Corinthians believers are described as the "Body of Christ," Christ is the second man, representative of mankind as was Adam. Christ is the "power of God and the wisdom of God." And in Philippians, somewhat earlier probably than Colossians, and more generally accepted as genuine, we have the well-known passage describing the pre-existence,

the voluntary humiliation, and the exaltation of Christ. "Christ being in His original nature in the substance of God, thought not that equality with God a thing to be grasped at," but emptied Himself of it and took the substance of man, and put on the appearance and outside aspect of a man. These indications are quite sufficient to make us feel that the Epistle to the Colossians is not inconsistent with St. Paul's teaching.

And (3), thirdly, the development does not imply anything which was not implicit in the very earliest Christian experience. If Jesus was the Son of God, if He could purchase man's redemption, if He could send God's Spirit into our hearts, if He could triumph over sin and death, if He could be associated with the Father as the joint Author of grace and peace, then this heightened significance of His Person and work in the Colossian Epistle develops, it does not add to the Christian Creed.

But now I want to take you for a minute or two outside St. Paul's Epistles. This developed teaching concerning our Lord is

not confined to these Epistles. We find it expressed, although in different language, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; we find it again, of course, in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, and that in two forms; we have the theological terminology of the Preface to the Gospel and of the Epistles, and we have the same ideas expressed in a different and very much simpler manner in the discourses of our Lord. The problem before us is "What is the history of this teaching?"

There is among critics, I imagine, a very widespread acquiescence in what was implied in the teaching of Baur and has coloured a larger amount of criticism since. St. Paul, it was held, first taught a developed theory concerning our Lord's Person. He did not himself get further than the teaching of 2 Corinthians and Romans. Some followers of his made the advance implied in Colossians and Philippians, others that implied in Hebrews. Then during the second century, under the influence of Philo, the Gospel of St. John was written and the discourses modelled on the doctrine which had gradually

been developed. This theory was worked out in an *a priori* way under the influence of Hegelianism, and the dates of the New Testament books were arranged to suit it. Gradually the influence of a more scientific method of criticism has put back the dates of the documents to a much earlier period, to the traditional date, or very near it; but the theory of development still dominates a great deal of thought.

I would suggest to you that it is more critical to assume the discourses of our Lord, as reported in St. John, as the source of all this development. If you do that the whole system becomes very much more natural. The common tradition of the Synoptic Gospels as contained in St. Mark represents the narrative of the facts and miracles of our Lord as it was preached to the people and taught to the Catechumens. The additional sources of St. Matthew and St. Luke contain the common preaching of Jesus to the multitude, largely in the form of parables. But that teaching is coloured by something higher and more intimate, and itself suggests

that our Lord's discourses could not be thus limited, and that higher teaching is contained in St. John's Gospel. If Jesus said, "I and My Father are one," the development becomes explicable. St. John's Gospel explains much more clearly how the opposition of the Jews grew up, an opposition which is really hardly accounted for in the Synoptic Gospels; it explains the source from which came the early primitive conception of the significance of the work of our Lord; it explains the source of the theological teaching of St. Paul, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of St. John himself in his Preface. Just as I would suggest that the normal Christian teaching is explained by the truth of the facts of our Lord's life contained in the Creed, so I would suggest that the Christian theology is only accounted for by such discourses of our Lord as are narrated in St. John's Gospel.

III.

Certain other lines of investigation may lead us to the same point. One of the most

characteristic doctrines in St. Paul's teaching is that of the Church. This is developed in its most complete form in the Epistle to the Ephesians; but all, or almost all, that is taught in that Epistle may be found implied or suggested, but not fully worked out, in other Epistles. Like all St. Paul's doctrinal teaching, it again has an intensely practical side, and it is not a dry and formal theological theory, but is directly associated with the mystical union of Christ and His followers.

It contains these four great ideas:—

1. In the first place, Christianity implies a society no longer confined to a single nation, but one which was to transcend all nations: in which there was to be neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor free, but all were to be one in Christ Jesus.

2. It was to be a corporate unity. "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." And to preserve this union St. Paul is prepared to make any sacrifices, or take any labour, "lest by any means I shall have laboured in vain."

3. It results in a wide extension of the principle of brotherly love. As a practical working out of this St. Paul developed with the greatest earnestness the help given by the Gentile Churches to the poor saints at Jerusalem; and he is continually emphasising the necessity of unity in the religious life. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

4. Fourthly, it means the unity of all Christian believers in Christ as their Head. "Christ, who is the Head over all things to the Church," "from whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body, unto the building up of itself in love."

Now what is the origin and growth of this idea? Is it a case of Paulinism or of Christianity? It certainly is not confined

to St. Paul's Epistles. The Acts of the Apostles narrates the external side of the history of Christianity, and it clearly represents the creation and growth of a society from the beginning, while St. Paul in the speech at Ephesus there reported speaks of the "Church which our Lord purchased with His own blood." If we turn to St. Peter's Epistle, we have no mention of the word "Church," but we find every Old Testament term which had been used to express the Old Testament Church-life transferred to the new spiritual Israel. There is too marked a difference for us to speak of it merely as a result of Pauline doctrine. The root of the idea lay in the Jewish Church, the word *ecclesia* was ready to hand, Judaism itself showed signs of change in the direction of a "Church" instead of a "nation," but the change had not been made and the word had not been adopted. Whence did this new conception come? The simplest answer which will account for all the rest is to say that it came from our Lord Himself. The first Gospel has told us how

our Lord had spoken of founding His Church upon the rock of Peter, and St. John has again given us in our Lord's discourses a spiritual source for all that St. Paul teaches. "I am the true Vine. . . . Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye except ye abide in Me. . . . Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you; abide ye in My love." And, again, in the high-priestly prayer: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us . . . and the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one."

Now if these words represent at all what our Lord taught, the whole growth of the idea of the Christian Church, in both its historical and practical side, can be adequately explained. Naturally and inevitably, under the teaching

of circumstances, the early Christians grew into a community. Naturally, they felt that they were in very close and special relations with Christ. Naturally, too, St. Paul seizes on this idea and works it out in all its bearings and in its relations to the great practical needs of his time. Our Lord, as represented by St. John, will adequately account for St. Paul.

One illustration more. Have we not been impressed by the high doctrine, if we may use the term of St. Paul, with regard to the Holy Communion? There are the somewhat enigmatic words referring to the Old Testament sacrifices which can hardly be interpreted except with reference to the New Testament. "And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ." Surely here St. Paul is referring to the Old Testament language which he had learnt in the New Testament. Then there are the well-known words: "The bread which we break is not a Communion of the Body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are

one bread and one body : for we all partake of the one bread." And then, most significant of all, is the passage which ascribes the sickness and death of those who had died to their unworthily partaking of the Lord's Supper. Surely all these passages imply a great deal more than people are sometimes accustomed to think. But whence came all this teaching? Was it merely the mind of the Apostle working on the words of institution? I venture to think that if we assume that behind this teaching of the Apostle there was in the Church the tradition of a discourse, or discourses of our Lord, similar to those in St. John's Gospel on the Bread of Life, that we can explain much more naturally both the history of the Holy Communion and the development of St. Paul's teaching.

Last Sunday we considered St. Paul's witness to the simple Gospel tradition ; it was something which St. Paul shared with the rest of the Primitive Church, which we find part of the universal preaching of Christianity twenty years after the death of Christ, which

is formulated in the ordinary confession of faith, which is based upon the ordinary knowledge of the life and teaching of Christ, which was contained in the documents intended for elementary instruction, and which is represented by the greater part of the contents of the three first Gospels. To-day I have drawn your attention to what seem at first sight the most specifically Pauline elements in St. Paul's teaching, I have suggested that they cannot be taken as anything isolated, but that Christian teaching of exactly similar character was developed in the early Church on somewhat different lines, that these all point to a common source, and that that source was the traditions of our Lord's teaching preserved for us mainly in St. John's Gospel, but represented by some elements in the other Gospels, and that that was simply the higher and more spiritual teaching existing quite naturally side by side with His more popular parables and really implied in many of them. The Christ of St. John's Gospel is necessary to explain the development of the Christian Church.

IV.

I have very little time left to speak of the more personal witness of St. Paul. Is it not, after all, the actual spiritual experience of Christians and the testimony of Christian lives which is among the best evidences for the truth of the revelation in Christ? There is no life which teaches this witness like that of St. Paul; there are no other documents which reflect so clearly as do his Epistles a mind absolutely conscious of the reality of his convictions, and visibly inspired and mastered by some force outside it. Let us analyse this evidence:—

There is (1), first of all, the fact of his conversion. I remember how a teacher to whom I have always looked up with the greatest respect first pointed out to me how convincing this testimony was, and how it had appealed to minds of the highest order. Here was a man of evidently the highest intellectual power, of great mental force, “no fool,” as men might say, in the things of the world, an ardent Jew, well instructed

in his own religion, on whom the conviction of the claims of Christ had come with tremendous force. He had been zealous for the traditions of his fathers; he had advanced in the Jews' religion beyond those of his own age; he had freely persecuted the Church of God. He had everything to lose, he had nothing to gain. But in overwhelming power had come the Word of God into his heart. It was not the work of any man, it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. God had separated him, as He had the Prophets of Israel, from his mother's womb; in His good pleasure the call came, and the reality of the voice could not be doubted, nor could the call be resisted. At once he obeyed the heavenly calling, and he never faltered afterwards until the end. We cannot doubt the reality of the witness.

Then (2), secondly, he is clearly conscious of his own inspiration, that he has received in an especial way God's Spirit and speaks with the authority that that gives him. Now the witness of a man to himself is by itself, of course, of little or no value. We have to convince ourselves of his reality and mission

on quite other evidence and by very different means, and when we are convinced by the testimony of his works, by the witness of others, by the credentials that he puts forward, then the actual claim that he makes should be examined. Now, St. Paul bears witness unmistakably to the reality of spiritual gifts in the Church, and to his conviction of the possession of these gifts. "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings in the same Spirit; and to another workings of miracles, and to another prophecy; . . . but all these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will."

St. Paul writes with the conviction that both he and the whole Church, in different degrees and in different capacities were possessed, possessed clearly and definitely, of spiritual gifts, with extraordinary manifesta-

tions. He assumes that the sick were healed, he assumes that miracles were wrought, implying that those he was writing to would admit it equally with himself; he assumes that the wisdom and knowledge of heavenly things which he and some of those to whom he spoke possessed came from the gift of God's Spirit; and we, examining the influence of his writings, and the power of his personality, and the reality of the conviction that came to him, and, perhaps, testing him by our own spiritual experience, become convinced of the truth to which he testified.

"I knew a man in Christ . . . (whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I know not; God knoweth) how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable things." All down the Christian ages there are those who, for the beauty of their character, and the earnestness of their faith, and the reality of their lives, appeal to us as men who more than others have been overmastered by conviction of God's truth, whose mind is inspired by God's Spirit, and whose testimony to their own religious experiences,

faintly echoed perhaps by our own, helps to convince us of the reality of the spiritual life. At the head of such testimony stands St. Paul. He bears witness to us by his writings of the reality and the contents of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ; he bears witness by his life and work and death to his own conviction of the reality of that revelation; by the intensity of his spiritual experience, by that life of his lived in spiritual union with his Master—"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain,"—he bears witness to the possibility for us men—imperfect, weak, sin-stained although we may be—to be lifted up even in this life above the things of this world in the spiritual union of our life in Christ.

BOOKS FOR STUDY AND REFERENCE

1. TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, by F. G. Kenyon (Macmillan and Co.).
 Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Macmillan and Co.).
 Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Græce*

2. INTRODUCTION.

Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*.

Westcott, *On the Canon of the New Testament* (Macmillan and Co.).

Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul* (Hodder and Stoughton).

Hort, *On the Romans and Ephesians* (Macmillan and Co.).

Zahn, *Einleitung and Geschichte der Kundus*.

„ *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*.

„ *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons*.

Articles in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, as to the view which doubts the genuineness of the Apostles, the articles by Van Manen in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

3. EXEGESIS.

Lightfoot, Editions of the Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon (Macmillan and Co.).

Sanday and Headlam on the Romans (T. and T. Clark).

4. ON THE SPECIAL SUBJECT OF THESE LECTURES READ PARTICULARLY—

Knowling, *The Witness of the Epistles* (Longmans).

A LIST OF NEW BOOKS

Published by

S. C. Brown, Langham & Company, Ltd.

Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. Price 1s. 6d.

QUIS HABITABIT.

(PSALM XV.)

By the Rev. JAMES ADDERLEY, M.A.

A Meditation for Christian Socialists.

Being the Substance of three Addresses delivered to the Christian Social Union at their Annual Retreat. Passiontide, 1901.

Pilot.—"Nowhere that we know of are the real aims of the Union stated so clearly and so convincingly."

Publishers' Circular.—"We have seldom read instructions on any sacred subject so practical and at the same time so sympathetic as these addresses."

British Weekly.—"It contains good practical remarks on Imperialism, usury, and such questions."

Daily News.—"Full of suggestive and brave speaking about social problems, business morality etc."

THE WORLD'S PULPIT SERIES.

Crown 8vo, handsomely printed and bound in cloth gilt, with portraits. Price 3s. 6d. each.

Publishers' Circular.—"The World's Pulpit Series,' which promises, if merit goes for anything, to have a great success."

A NEW EARTH.

SERMONS, ADDRESSES AND LECTURES.

By Rev. JAMES ADDERLEY, M.A.

Church Times.—"A notable addition to their excellent 'World's Pulpit Series.' . . . If any one wishes to read a straightforward and uncompromising defence of the citadel of the Catholic position, written so as to be understood of all men, we have yet to find a better book to recommend our readers than Father Adderley's."

Daily News.—"There is much in this volume that arouses controversy. . . . There is honesty, passion and sincerity on every page."

Christian Commonwealth.—"The Rev. James Adderley has made for himself a unique place in the Anglican Church by his ardent sociological advocacy. What that place is may be accurately understood by any reader of this new work. Instead of Christian doctrine of the abstract theological order, we have before us the practical philosophy of kindness, love and philanthropy. Mr. Adderley is one of the most lucid of living exponents Christian Socialism."

THE WORLD'S PULPIT SERIES.

Crown 8vo, handsomely printed and bound in cloth gilt, with portraits. Price 3s. 6d. each

TRUE RELIGION.

By the Very Rev. F. W. FARRAR, D.D.

Dean of Canterbury.

The Spectator.—"Dean Farrar gives us here a very noble and inspiring volume. . . . He uses plain speech on many questions which touch the public and private life of England."

The Christian.—"Fresh and original. The way of Salvation and the provision for progress in the Christian life are pointed out so that the simplest may understand and the most timid may be encouraged to step forward."

Family Churchman.—"It has the value of being a guide to those who read it, to a higher and more spiritual worship."

THE GLORY OF LIFE.

By Rev. J. MONRO GIBSON, M.A., D.D.

Evangelical Magazine.—"Finely suggestive illustrations light up this book. From end to end the pages are alive. Clean vision, hopeful outlook, and strong, fair-minded facing of facts are the characteristics of this volume."

Church Times.—"Fresh, vigorous discourses."

Church Family Newspaper.—"Sermons and addresses, in which the great Nonconformist preacher is seen at his best."

OLD AND NEW.

By Rev. CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

Guardian.—"Canon Scott Holland's immense enthusiasm and invincible hope."

Publishers' Circular.—"Earnest, thoughtful. . . . Sound religious teaching, great scholarly treatment."

British Weekly.—"All the sermons are alive and energetic, and all of them bear the unmistakable mark of deep conviction and sincerity."

S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.,
47, Great Russell Street, W.C.

NEW NOVELS.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, price 6s.

VALENCIA VARELST

By M. A. SYLVESTRE.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, price 6s.

GRACE MARLOW

By JOSEPH CLAYTON,

Author of "Father Dolling: A Memoir."

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, price 2s. 6d. net.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE

By W. C. BARNES.

S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.,
47, Great Russell Street, W.C.

Square 16mo, bound in vellum gilt, gilt top, 3s. net.

IMMENSEE.

By THEODORE STORM.

Translated from the German by Irma A. Heath.

"Immensee," the translation here presented, is Storm's best known work. Published in 1852 when he was still a young author, it reveals, perhaps better than his later stories, the real turn of Storm's mind. Although the little tale may be too full of sentiment to appeal entirely to the highly critical student of literature, yet the fact still remains that it has constantly maintained its place in the hearts of the public since the day it was issued, and is at present in something like the thirtieth edition. "Immensee" of all his works is most beloved. Storm fills us with a mournful pity when he tells us how two hearts were denied their rightful portion of human joy; but sadder than the pity awakened is the thought that "Immensee" is a just criticism of life. (From Introduction.)

Reprints of Old-Fashioned Children's Books.

Square 16mo. Paper boards, with design, price 1s.

CINDERELLA,

OR THE LITTLE GLASS SLIPPER

Illustrated with appropriate Engravings.

Reprinted from the edition published by J. Harris, successor to E. Newbery, 1808.

Athenæum.—"An attractive reissue of a booklet which delighted children a hundred years ago and pleases us well now."

Antiquary.—"A charming little reprint. The illustrations, showing all the characters in Georgian costume, are very quaint."

Christian Commonwealth.—"The quaint 'elegant and appropriate engravings' are delightful. Altogether it is a neat and charming diminutive production."

Square 16mo. Printed in Sepia and daintily bound in cloth with effective cover design. Price 1s. 6d.

RHYMES FOR THE NURSERY.

Reprinted from an Edition of a Century ago, and contains OLD DAME TROT, OLD MOTHER HUBBARD, COCK ROBIN, MY MOTHER, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, CHILDREN IN THE WOOD, CRIES OF LONDON, &c.

Liverpool Courier.—"There is sure to be a delighted welcome to this revival in old-fashioned guise of Old Mother Hubbard, Dame Trot, Cock Robin, &c."

Glasgow Herald.—"All the illustrations have that peculiar quaintness which had not quite disappeared in the days that some of us can just remember, and which contrasts so strikingly with the artistic productions of the present day."

Nottingham Guardian.—"It is interesting to see what amused our ancestors when they were children, and it will be a pleasure to many to see again the familiar nursery rhymes which were repeated to them but are practically forgotten among the children of to-day."

Baptist Times.—"A charming little volume for the little folks."

S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.,
47, Great Russell Street, W.C.

4to, bound in white boards, 16s. net. Large-Type Edition, on Dutch Hand-made Paper.

The MEDITATIONS of the EMPEROR

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS. A New Rendering, based on the Foulis Translation of 1742. By GEORGE W. CHRYSTAL, Warner Exhibitioner of Balliol College, Oxford.

Spectator.—"The exquisite edition of this immortal work that lies before us in a new rendering—the balanced phrasing of which reminds us forcibly of Sir Thomas Browne—by Mr. Geo. W. Chrystal based on the Foulis translation of 1742."

4to, sewn, 1s. net.

The SCOTTISH HERALDIC CALENDAR for the YEAR 1903.

The Calendar contains full-page Coloured Prints of the Arms of the Prince of Wales, as Prince and Great Steward of Scotland, impaling those of his Wife, the Princess Mary of Teck; also the Arms of Robert the Bruce, and four of his eminent supporters in his struggle for Scottish independence. The Calendar contains the names and days of many Scottish Saints celebrated in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland. These have been gathered from ancient Scottish Church Calendars and Archbishop Laud's Prayer Book.

4to, sewn, 1s. net.

The IMPERIAL HERALDIC CALENDAR, 1903.

Containing 9 Coloured Plates, comprising the Arms of Salisbury, Argyll, Devonshire, Rosebery, Burton, Harcourt and others.

Imp. folio, cloth extra, 12s. 6d. net.

NEW TESTAMENT PICTURES

ILLUSTRATING the LIFE and WORK of OUR SAVIOUR upon EARTH. From the Designs of JULIUS SCHNORR VON CARLSFELD

4to, art linen, gilt tops, 300 Copies only, 21s. net.

The DOMINICAN CHURCH of SANTA

MARIA NOVELLA at FLORENCE. A Historical, Architectural, and Artistic Study. By the Rev. J. WOOD BROWN, M.A., Author of "Michael Scot," &c. With Ground Plans and Illustrations of the Church and Convent.

The historical Church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, a building of exceptional importance in the History of European Art, has not yet been the subject of a Monograph by any English writer; in fact, with the exception of Padre Fineschi's attempt in a volume issued in 1790, and now very difficult to obtain, no work on this subject has appeared.

The Rev. J. Wood Brown has gathered his material in the course of extended studies during the last four years in the Italian, and especially the Florentine, archives. The first part of the book treats of the early ecclesiastical history of Santa Maria Novella down to 1221, when the Dominicans began to occupy it, and contains many curious and hitherto unpublished details and views of Church life in Florence during the early middle ages. The second part is chiefly devoted to Architecture, and here a new theory is developed regarding the age and growth of the present Church, which will be found full of important consequence as regards some of the well-known treasures of art which it contains and the stories which Vasari has associated with it and them. The third part is entirely devoted to the famous Spanish Chapel. Here for the first time the attempt is made to furnish a complete and coherent interpretation of the frescoes as a whole, with reference to the comprehensive scheme of thought which they were painted to illustrate.

S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.,
47, Great Russell Street, W.C.

Small 4to, stiff boards, white parchment backs, gilt tops,
21s. net.

SONGS BY BURNS.

Richly decorated title pages introducing Thistle and Bluebell and ornamented by newly designed initials throughout, printed on Whatman paper. Limited to 500 copies.

8vo, cloth gilt, gilt tops, 12s. 6d. net.

THE SCOTS IN GERMANY.

By T. A. FISHER.

An historical account of the relations between Scotland and Germany, from the Thirteenth to the Nineteenth Century, forming a continuation of Burton's "Scot Abroad." With 3 Portraits.

Scotsman.—"This valuable and interesting addition to the literature of exterior Scottish history. . . . The book is throughout a work of diligent and exact scholarship, which breaks ground in a region of study into which all Scottish readers will follow its author with interest and profit."

Times.—"A piece of accurate and competent research."

Large 4to, half parchment binding, pale green paper sides,
gilt tops, 21s. net.

AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE.

Translated into English. Printed in large type on Arnold's hand-made paper, with richly decorated initials throughout, all taken from authentic Celtic MSS. of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. Limited to 475 copies.

Small 4to, stiff boards, white parchment backs, gilt tops,
10s. 6d. net.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

By E. B. BROWNING.

Printed in large clear type on Whatman paper, with richly decorated title page and ornamental initial letters to each Sonnet. Limited to 300 copies.

Small 4to, stiff boards, white parchment backs, gilt tops,
10s. 6d. net.

SONNETS BY KEATS.

Printed in large clear type on Whatman paper, with richly decorated title page and ornamental initial letters to each Sonnet. Limited to 300 copies.

S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.,
47, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.



BX 5133 .C7

Critical questions

DATE DUE

Gardner-Webb Library

P.O. 836

Boiling Springs, NC 28017

Gardner-Webb University Library



0 0000 00005723 5